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LETTERS

FROM

THE ALLEGHANY MOUNTAINS.

LETTERS

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FROM

THE ALLEGHANY MOUNTAINS.

BY

CHARLES LANMAN,

AUTHOR OF "A TOUR TO THE RIVER SAGUENAY," "A SUMMER IN THE WILDERNESS," AND "ESSAYS FOR SUMMER HOURS."



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TO

JOSEPH GALES, ESQ.,

My Dear Sir,—

I have two reasons for embellishing this little volume with your distinguished and honored name. In the first place, the material of which it is composed, was originally published in the *National Intelligencer;* and in the second place, I desire to record the fact, that for many years past, in all matters appertaining to my pen you have been to me an invaluable counsellor and friend.

In love and gratitude,

Very sincerely yours,

Charles Lanman.

Washington, D. C., August, 1849.

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LETTERS

FROM

THE ALLEGHANY MOUNTAINS.

LETTER I.

DAHLONEGA, GEORGIA, April, 1848.

THE Cherokee word Dah-lon-e-ga signifies *the place of yellow metal;* and is now applied to a small hamlet at the foot of the Alleghany Mountains, in Lumpkin county, Georgia, which is reputed to be the wealthiest gold region in the United States. It is recorded of De Soto and his followers that, in the sixteenth century, they explored this entire Southern country in search of gold, and unquestionable evidences of their work have been discovered in various sections of the State. Among these testimonials may be mentioned the remains of an old furnace, and other works for mining, which have been brought to light by recent explorations. But the attention of our own people was first directed to this region while yet the Cherokees were in possession of the land, though the digging of gold was not made a regular business until after they had been

politely banished by the General Government. As soon as the State of Georgia had become the rightfulposs essor of the soil (according to *law*), much contention and excitement arose among the people as to who should have the best opportunities for making fortunes; and, to settle all difficulties, it was decided by the State Legislature that the country should be surveyed and divided into lots of forty and one hundred and sixty acres, and distributed to the people by lottery. For several years subsequent to that period, deeds of wrong and outrage were practised to a very great extent by profligate adventurers who flocked to this El Dorado. In the year 1838, however, the Government established a branch Mint at this place, since which time a much better state of things has existed in Dahlonega.

The appearance of this village, though not more than a dozen years old, is somewhat antiquated, owing to the fact that the houses are chiefly built of logs, and, having never been painted, are particularly dark and dingy, but uncommonly picturesque in form and location. The population of the place is about five hundred. It is located upon a hill, and though the country around is quite uneven, having been deeply ravined by atmospheric agents, when viewed in connection with the mountains, (some ten or fifteen miles off,) which seem to hem it on three sides, presents the appearance of a pit to a magnificent amphitheatre. On approaching Dahlonega I noticed that the water-courses had all been mutilated with the spade and pickaxe, and that their waters were of a deep yellow ; and having explored the country since then, I find that such is the condition of all the streams within a circuit of many miles. Large brooks (and even an occasional river) have been turned into a new channel, and thereby deprived of their original

beauty. And of all the hills in the vicinity of Dahlonega which I have visited, I have not yet seen one which is not actually riddled with shafts and tunnels. The soil is of a primitive character, quite yellowish in color, composed of sand and clay, and uncommonly easy to excavate with the spade. Heretofore the gold ore of Lumpkin county has been obtained from what is called the deposit beds, but the miners are now beginning to direct their attention to the veined ore, which is supposed to be very abundant in all directions. It is generally found in quartz and a species of slate stone. The gold region of Georgia, strictly speaking, is confined to a broad belt, which runs in a northeastern and southwestern direction from Dahlonega, which may be considered its centre. Several auriferous veins traverse the town, and it is common after a rain to see the inhabitants busily engaged in *hunting* for gold in the streets. That huge quantities are thus accumulated in *these* days I am not ready to believe, whatever may have been done in former years. I know not that any very remarkable specimens of gold ore have been found in the immediate vicinity of Dahlonega, but an idea of the wealth of the State in this particular may be gathered from the fact, that several lumps have heretofore been found in different sections, which were worth from five hundred to one thousand dollars. More valuable specimens have been found in North Carolina; but while Virginia, the Carolinas, and Alabama have all produced a goodly amount of gold, I have heard it conceded that Georgia has produced the largest quantity and decidedly the best quality.

And now with regard to the fortunes that have been made in this region. They are very few and far between. But, by way of illustration, I will give two or three incidents

which have come to my knowledge. In passing, however, I may repeat the remark made to me by an intelligent gentleman, that the expenses of digging out the gold in this section of country have ever exceeded the gain by about one hundred per cent. Immense amounts of labor as well as money have been expended, and, generally speaking, the condition of the people has not been improved; the very wealth of the country has caused the ruin of many individuals. The following story is a matter of popular history. After the State Legislature had divided the Cherokee Purchase into lots and regularly numbered them, it was rumored about the country that lot No. 1052 was a great prize, and every body was on tiptoe with regard to its distribution by the proposed lottery. At that time 1052 *figured* in the dreams of every Georgian, and those figures were then far more *popular* than the figures 54 40 have been in these latter days. Among the more crazy individuals who attended the lottery was one Mosely, who had determined either to draw the much talked of prize *or purchase it of the winner*, even though it should be at the cost of his entire property, which was quite large. The drawing took place, and 1052 came into the possession of a poor farmer named Ellison. Mosely immediately mounted his horse and hastened to Ellison's farm, where he found the child of fortune following his plough. The would-be purchaser made known the object of his visit, and Ellison only laughed at the impetuosity of his impatient friend. Ellison said he was not anxious to sell the lot, but if Mosely *must* have it, he *might* have it for $30,000. Mosely acceded to the terms, and in paying for the lot sacrificed most of his landed and personal property. The little property which was left him he was compelled to employ in working his

mines; he labored with great diligence for several years, but he could never make both ends meet, for his mines were not at all distinguished for their richness. In process of time he was compelled to sell 1052 for what it would bring, and having squandered that remnant of his former wealth, he left the country for parts unknown, a veritable beggar. But, what is more singular than all, the present proprietor of 1052 is that identical man Ellison, who is annually realizing a handsome sum of money from the newly-discovered gold ore found in the bowels of his lottery lot.

Another instance of good fortune, unattended with any *alloy*, is as follows: Five years ago a couple of brothers, who were at work upon the Georgia railroad, took it into their heads to visit Dahlonega and try their luck in the mining business. They were hardworking Irishmen, and understood the science of digging to perfection. They leased one or two lots in this vicinity, and are now reputed to be worth $15,000.

And now that it has come into my mind, I will mention another *lottery* anecdote, which was related to me by an old resident. By way of introduction, however, I ought here to mention that this region is famous for the number and size of its rattlesnakes, and that our hero had an utter abhorrence of the reptile. Among those who obtained prizes at the great drawing, before alluded to, was an individual from the southern part of the State, who drew a lot in this vicinity. In process of time he came to the north to explore his property, and had called at the house of a farmer near his land, for the purpose of obtaining a guide. In conversing with the farmer, he took occasion to express his dislike to the rattlesnake; whereupon the farmer con-

cluded that he would attempt a speculation. Remembering that in going to the stranger's land he might (if he chose to do so) pass through an out-of-the-way ravine which abounded in the dreaded snake, the farmer beckoned to the stranger, and they took their way towards the ravine. After they had arrived at the spot, hardly a rod did the pedestrians pass without hearing the hiss of a snake or seeing its fiery tongue, and the stranger was as completely frightened as any one could possibly be by a similar cause. In his despair he turned to his companion and said:

"Are snakes as plenty as this *all* over the country?"

"I can't say about that, stranger, but one of my neighbors killed about a hundred last year, and I've hearn tell that your land is very rich in snakes."

"Now I ain't a going any further in this infernal region, and I want to know if you have a horse that you'll give me for my land—gold ore, snakes, and all."

"I have, and a first-rate horse too."

"It's a bargain."

On the following morning, the stranger, like the hero of a novel, might be seen mounted on a Dahlonega steed, pursuing his devious pathway along a lonely road towards the south pole.

Of the uncounted gold mines which are found in this region, the most fruitful at the present times lies about twenty-five miles from here, in a northerly direction, and is the property of Mr. Lorenzo Dow Smith. And the success which has ever attended Lorenzo is worth recording. In a conversation that I had with him in this place, where he is now staying, I remarked that I should like to embody his history in a paragraph of my note-book, and he replied to me as follows:

"I was born in Vermont; I came into this Southern country twenty-four years ago as a clock-pedler, where I drove a good business. I used to spend my summers among the mountains of the Cherokee country, partly for the purpose of keeping away from the fever, and partly with a view of living over again the days of my boyhood, which were spent among the Green Mountains. I made some money, and when the gold fever commenced I took it and went to speculating in gold lots, though I spent many years without finding lots of gold. I associated with bear hunters, and explored every corner and stream of this great mountain land, away to the north, and have seen more glorious scenery than any other live man. I'm forty years old, unmarried, love good liquor, and go in for having fun. 'Bout four years ago, it came into my thinking mug that there must be plenty of gold in the bed of Coosa creek, which runs into Coosa river. I traded for a lot there, and went to work. I found a deposit, gave up work, and went to leasing small sections, which are now worked by a good many men, and give me a decent living. I have had all sorts of luck in my day—good luck and bad luck. When I'm prosperous I always hope to be more prosperous still, and when I have bad luck, I always wish for worse luck—if it'll only come. I never allow myself to be disappointed. The longer I live the more anxious am I to do some good to my fellow-men. I've passed the blossom of my life, and I don't expect to live many years longer; I haven't lived as I ought to have lived, but I hope it'll be well with me when I come to take my final sleep. But enough. I'm going out to my mine on a visit to-morrow, and if you'll go with me, I'll show you some real Vermont trout, and mountain peaks which would shame the camel's hump of old Yankee land."

I did not accept Lorenzo's tempting invitation, but I made up my mind that he was an original. Some of the scenery to which he alluded I shall visit in due time.

In former times, as before intimated, the miners of this region were mostly foreigners, and an abandoned race, but the principal deposits and veins are now worked by native Georgians, who are a very respectable class of people. Among them are many young men, who labor hard and are intelligent. The dangers of mining in this region are rather uncommon, owing principally to the lightness of the soil. Many of the accidents which occur, however, are the result of carelessness; and the most melancholy one I have heard of is as follows: A man named Hunt, together with his son and another man named Smith, were digging for gold on the side of a neighboring hill. At the end of a tunnel, which was some thirty feet long, they excavated a large cave or hall, which they had neglected to support in the usual manner. They apprehended no danger, but were told by a neighbor that their conduct was imprudent. The elder Hunt thought he wou'd be on the safe side, and on a certain afternoon went into the woods to cut the necessary timber, while his son and Smith continued their labors in the cave. Night came on, and the father, having accomplished his task, retired to his home. On taking his seat at the supper table it came into his mind that his son and Smith were somewhat later in coming home than usual. He waited awhile, but becoming impatient set out for the cave, and, on reaching it, to his utter astonishment and horror, he found that the roof of the cave had fallen in. The alarm was given, and the whole village was assembled to extricate the unfortunate miners, and by the aid of orches the bodies were recovered. The boy was found in

a running attitude, as if overtaken while endeavoring to escape, and the man Smith was found clinging to a single post, which had been vainly used to prop the ceiling of the cave.

With regard to the means employed by the miners I have but one word to say. The deposit gold is extracted from the gravel by means of a simple machine called a rocker, which merely shifts and washes out the metal. The vein gold is brought to light by means of what is called a pounding mill, which reduces the rock to the consistency of sand, when the ore is separated by the use of quicksilver. In this particular department of their business the Dahlonega miners confess themselves to be comparatively ignorant; and what proves this to be the case is the fact, that some of their ore has frequently been worked over a second time with considerable profit.

But the prominent attraction of Dahlonega, I have not yet touched upon—I allude to the *Mint Establishment.* The building itself, which is quite large, has a commanding appearance. It was erected in 1837, at an expense of $70,000, and the machinery which it contains cost $30,000. It is built of brick, but stuccoed so as to resemble stone. It gives employment to nine men, who receive for their services, collectively, the sum of $12,000. The Superintendent, who also acts as Treasurer, is J. F. Cooper, (son, by the way, of the famous actor of that name;) the Coiner is D. H. Mason, who has a very interesting cabinet of minerals, and the Assayer is J. L. Todd. The Dahlonega Branch Mint and the one located at Charlottsville, North Carolina, are the only ones in the United States which coin the gold on the very spot where it is found. The New Orleans Branch, as well as the mother Mint in Philadelphia,

are chiefly occupied with foreign ores. Of the two first mentioned, Dahlonega has thus far been the most successful, the coinage in one year having amounted to $600,000. At the present time, however, the business of this Mint is said to be on the wane. The coinage of the three branch Mints mentioned above is uniform with that of the mother Mint, and it is all systematically tested there for approval. It thus appears that the whole establishment is a branch of the Treasury Department of the United States, and under the supervision of the Secretary of the Treasury, and an account of the progress and condition of the bureau is annually given to Congress.

The smallest amount of gold ore received at the Dahlonega Mint by law has to be worth one hundred dollars. When the miner has obtained a sufficient amount, he takes it to the Mint and delivers it to the Superintendent. That officer takes an account of it, and passes it over to the Assayer, who fixes its value, when the miner receives the allotted sum of money. The operation of coining is performed by the power of steam, and may be briefly described by the words rolling, drawing, cutting, and stamping. Some of the Dahlonega gold is said to be as pure as any in the world, but it is commonly alloyed with silver. One or two specimens were shown me, which were just one half silver: and yet it is said that *silver ore* is nowhere found in this section of country. The value of pure gold is one dollar per pennyweight: and I have learned since I came here that every genuine American eagle is made by law to contain one-twentieth of silver and one-twentieth of copper. The word *bullion*, which we hear so often mentioned among commercial men, is a misnomer, for it is legitimately applied only to unwrought gold, washed grains or gold dust,

amalgamated cakes and balls, and melted bars and cakes; and the word *ingot* is applied to a bar of gold, which may be manufactured into two hundred half eagles, or one thousand dollars. To give a scientific account of what I have seen in the Dahlonega Mint would probably please my scientific readers, but, as I am not writing for them, they must excuse me. "What is writ, is writ; would it were worthier!"

LETTER II.

Logan's Plantation, Georgia, April, 1848.

During my stay at Dahlonega I heard a good deal said about a native wonder, called "Track Rock," which was reported to be some thirty miles off, on the northwestern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. On revolving the information in my mind, I concluded that this rock was identical with one which had been mentioned to me by Professor James Jackson, of the University of Georgia, and I also remembered that the Professor had shown me a specimen of the rock he alluded to, which contained the imprint or impression of a human foot. My curiosity was of course excited, and I resolved to visit the natural or artificial wonder. I made the pilgrimage on foot, and what I saw and heard of peculiar interest on the occasion the reader will find recorded in the present letter.

In accomplishing the trip to "Track Rock" and back again to this place I was two days. On the first day I walked only twenty miles, having tarried occasionally to take a pencil sketch or hear the birds, as they actually filled the air with melody. My course lay over a very uneven country, which was entirely uncultivated, excepting some half dozen quiet vales, which presented a cheerful appearance. The woods were generally composed of oak and chestnut, and destitute to a considerable extent of under-

growth; the soil was composed of clay and sand, and apparently fertile; and clear sparkling brooks intersected the country, and were the first that I had seen in Georgia. I had a number of extensive mountain views, which were more beautiful than imposing; and among the birds that attracted my attention were the red-bird, mocking-bird, quail, lark, poke, woodpecker, jay, king-bird, crow, blue-bird, and dove, together with a large black-bird, having a red head, (apparently of the woodpecker genus,) and another smaller bird, whose back was of a rich black, breast a bright brown, with an occasional white feather in its wing, which I fancied to be a species of robin. Since these were my companions, it may be readily imagined that "pleasantly the *hours* of Thalaba went by."

I spent the night at a place called "Tesantee Gap," in the cabin of a poor farmer, where I was most hospitably entertained. My host had a family of nine sons and three daughters, not one of whom had ever been out of the wilderness region of Georgia. Though the father was a very intelligent man by nature, he told me that he had received no education, and could hardly read a chapter in the Bible. He informed me, too, that his children were but little better informed, and seemed deeply to regret his inability to give them the schooling which he felt they needed. "I have always desired," said he, "that I could live on *some public road*, so that my girls might occasionally *see* a civilized man, since it is fated that they will never meet with them in society." I felt sorry for the worthy man, and endeavored to direct his attention from himself to the surrounding country. He told me the mountains were susceptible of cultivation even to their summits, and that the principal productions of his farm were corn, wheat, rye, and

potatoes; also, that the country abounded in game, such as deer, turkeys, and bears, and an occasional panther. Some of the mountains, he said, were covered with hickory, and a peculiar kind of oak, and that on said mountains gray squirrels were very abundant. The streams, he informed me, were well supplied with *large minnows*, by which I afterwards ascertained he meant the brook trout.

While conversing with my old friend, an hour or so before sunset, we were startled by the baying of his hounds, and on looking up the narrow road running by his home, we saw a fine-looking doe coming towards us on the run. In its terror the poor creature made a sudden turn, and scaling a garden fence was overtaken by the dogs on a spot near which the wife of my host was planting seeds, when she immediately seized a bean-pole, and by a single blow deprived the doe of life. In a very few moments her husband was on the ground, and, having put his knife to the throat of the animal, the twain re-entered their dwelling, as if nothing had happened out of the common order of events. This was the first deer that I ever knew to be killed by a woman. When I took occasion to compliment the dogs of my old friend, he said that one of them was a "powerful runner; for he had known him to follow a deer for three days and three nights." Having in view my future rambles among the mountains, I questioned my companion about the snakes of this region, and, after remarking that they were "very plenty," he continued as follows: "But of all the snake stories you ever heard tell of, I do not believe you ever heard of a *snake fight*. I saw one, Monday was a week, between a black-racer and a rattlesnake. It was in the road, about a mile from here, and when I saw them the racer had the other by the back of the head, and was

coiling his body all around him, as if to squeeze him to death. The scuffle was pretty severe, but the racer soon killed the fellow with rattles, and I killed the racer. It was a queer scrape, and I reckon you do not often see the like in your country."

I should have obtained some more mites of information from my host had not a broken tooth commenced aching, and hurried me off to bed.

I left the habitation of my mountain friend immediately after breakfast the following morning, and "ne'er repassed that hoary threshold more."

On the following day I passed through the Blue Ridge, and visited the Mecca of my pilgrimage, and was—disappointed. I was piloted to it by a neighboring mountaineer, who remarked, "This is Track Rock, and it's no great shakes after all." I found it occupying an unobtrusive place by the road side. It is of an irregular form and quite smooth, rises gradually from the ground to the height of perhaps three feet, and is about twenty feet long by the most liberal measurement. It is evidently covered with a great variety of tracks, including those of men, bears or dogs, and turkeys, together with indistinct impressions of a man's hand. Some of the impressions are half an inch thick, while many of them appear to be almost entirely effaced. The rock seemed to be a species of slate-colored soapstone. The conclusion to which I have arrived, after careful examination, is as follows: This rock is located on what was once an Indian trail, and, having been used by the Cherokees as a resting place, it was probably their own ingenuity which conceived and executed the characters which now puzzle the philosophy of many men. The scenery about Track Rock is not remarkable for its grandeur, though you can

hardly turn the eye in any direction without beholding an agreeable mountain landscape. In returning through Tesantee Gap and the valley below, I met with no adventures worth recording, and will therefore conclude my present epistle with a paragraph concerning the plantation where I am now tarrying.

The proprietor is an intelligent and worthy gentleman, who is reputed to be the nabob of this region. He acquired a portion of his wealth by digging gold, but is now chiefly devoting himself to agriculture. He complains of the little advancement which the people of Northern Georgia are making in the arts of husbandry, and thinks that it would be much better for the State if the people could be persuaded to follow the plough, instead of wasting their time and money in searching for gold, which metal, he seems to think, is nearly exhausted in this section of country. Among the curious things which I have seen under his roof, is a small but choice collection of minerals, fossil remains, and Indian relics, belonging to his eldest son. Among the latter may be mentioned a heavy stone pipe, made in imitation of a duck, which was found in Macon county, North Carolina, fifteen feet below the surface; and also a small cup, similar to a crucible, and made of an unknown earthy material, which was found in this county about nine feet below the surface, and directly under a large tree. But the mail boy's horn is blowing and I must close.

LETTER III.

Valley of Nacoochee, Georgia, April, 1848.

I now write from the most charming valley of this southern wilderness. The river Nacoochee is a tributary of the Chattahooche, and, for this country, is a remarkably clear, cold, and picturesque stream. From the moment that it doffs the title of brook and receives the more dignified one of river, it begins to wind itself in a most wayward manner through a valley which is some eight or ten miles long, when it wanders from the vision of the ordinary traveller and loses itself among unexplored hills. The valley is perhaps a mile wide, and, as the surrounding hills are not lofty, it is distinguished more for its beauty than any other quality; and this characteristic is greatly enhanced by the fact, that while the surrounding country remains in its original wilderness the valley itself is highly cultivated, and the eye is occasionally gratified by cottage scenes which suggest the ideas of contentment and peace. Before the window where I am now writing lies a broad meadow, where horses and cattle are quietly grazing, and from the neighboring hills comes to my ear the frequent tinkling of a bell, which tells me that the sheep or goats are returning from their morning rambles in the cool woods.

And now for the associations connected with the valley of Nacoochee. Foremost among them all is a somewhat

isolated mountain, the summit of which is nearly three miles distant from the margin of the valley, It occupies a conspicuous position in all the views of the surrounding country, and from one point partially resembles the figure of a crouching bear, from which circumstance it was named the *Yonah* Mountain—yonah being the Cherokee for bear. The mountain bear seems to be proud of his exalted position, and well he may, for he is the natural guardian of one of the sweetest valleys in the world. Its height is nearly two thousand feet above the water in its vicinity.

But the artificial memorials of Nacoochee are deserving of a passing notice. On the southern side of the valley, and about half a mile apart, are two mounds, which are the wonder of all who see them. They are perhaps forty feet high, and similar in form to a half globe. One of them has been cultivated while the other is covered with grass and bushes, and surmounted, directly on the top, by a large pine tree. Into one of them an excavation has been made, and, as I am informed, pipes, tomahawks, and human bones were found in great numbers. Connected with these is an Indian legend, which I will give my readers presently.

Many discoveries have been made in the valley of Nacoochee corroborating the general impression, that De Soto or some other adventurer in the olden times performed a pilgrimage through the northern part of Georgia in search of gold. Some twelve years ago, for example, half a dozen log cabins were discovered in one portion of the valley, lying upwards of ten feet below the surface; and, in other places, something resembling a furnace, together with iron spoons, pieces of earthenware, and leaden plates were disinterred, and are now in the possession of the resident inhabitants. In this connection might also be mentioned

the ruin of an old fort, which may now be seen a few miles north of Nacoochee valley. It is almost obliterated from the face of the earth, but its various ramparts can be easily traced by the careful observer. Its purpose we can easily divine, but with regard to its history even the Indians are entirely ignorant.

Connected with the valley of Nacoochee are the following legends, which were related to me by the "oldest inhabitant" of this region.

In this valley, in the olden times, resided *Kostoyeak*, or the "Sharp Shooter," a chief of the Cherokee nation. He was renowned for his bravery and cunning, and among his bitterest enemies was one *Chonesta*, or the "Black Dog," a chief of the Tennessees. In those days there was a Yemassee maiden residing in the low country, who was renowned for her beauty in all the land, and she numbered among her many suitors the famous Kostoyeak and four other warriors, upon each of whom she was pleased to smile; whereupon she discarded all the others, and among them the Tennessee chief Chonesta. On returning to his own country he breathed revenge against Kostoyeak, and threatened that if he succeeded to the hand of the Yemassee beauty the Cherokee's tribe should be speedily exterminated. The merits of the four rival chiefs was equal, and the Yemassee chief could not decide upon which to bestow his daughter. Kostoyeak was her favorite, and in order to secure a marriage with him, she proposed to her father that she should accept that warrior who could discover where the waters of the Savannah and those of the Tennessee took their rise among the mountains. Supposing that no such place existed the father gave his consent, and the great hunt was commenced. At the end of the first noon Kostoyeak

returned with the intelligence that he had found a gorge—now called the gap of the Blue Ridge as well as Rabun Gap—where the two great rivers "shake hands and commence their several journeys, each singing a song of gladness and freedom" In process of time the Yemassee chief was convinced that Kostoyeak told a true story, and he was, therefore, married to the long-loved maiden of his choice.

Enraged at these events, Chonesta assembled his warriors, and made war upon the fortunate Cherokee and his whole tribe. The Great Spirit was the friend of Kostoyeak, and he was triumphant. He slew Chonesta with his own hand and destroyed his bravest warriors, and finally became the possessor of half the entire Tennessee valley.

Years rolled on and Kostoyeak as well as his wife were numbered among the dead. They were buried with every Indian honor in the valley of Nacoochee, and, to perpetuate their many virtues in after years, their several nations erected over their remains the *mounds* which now adorn a portion of the valley where they lived.

The other legend to which I have alluded is as follows: The meaning of the Indian word Nacoochee is the "Evening Star," and was applied to a Cherokee girl of the same name. She was distinguished for her beauty and a strange attachment for the flowers and the birds of her native valley. She died in her fifteenth summer, and at the twilight hour of a summer day. On the evening following her burial a newly-born star made its appearance in the sky, and all her kindred cherished the belief that she whom they had thought as lovely as the star, had now become the brightest of the whole array which looked down upon the world, and so she has ever been remembered (as well as the

valley where she lived) as Na-coo-chee; or the Evening Star. The spot of earth where the maiden is said to have been buried is now covered with flowers, and the waters of the beautiful Nacoochee seem to be murmuring a perpetual song in memory of the departed.

That my letter may leave a permanent impression upon my reader's mind, I will append to it the following poem written by a Georgia poet, Henry R. Jackson, Esq.

Mount Yonah—Vale of Nacoochee.

Before me, as I stand, his broad, round head
 Mount Yonah lifts the neighboring hills above,
While, at his foot, all pleasantly is spread
 Nacoochee's vale, sweet as a dream of love.
 Cradle of Peace! mild, gentle as the dove
Whose tender accents from yon woodlands swell,
 Must she have been who thus has interwove
Her name with thee, and thy soft, holy spell,
And all of peace which on this troubled globe may dwell!

Nacoochee—in tradition, thy sweet queen—
 Has vanished with her maidens: not again
Along thy meadows shall their forms be seen;
 The mountain echoes catch no more the strain
 Of their wild Indian lays at evening's wane;
No more, where rumbling branches interwine,
 They pluck the jasmine flowers, or break the cane
Beside the marshy stream, or from the vine
Shake down, in purple showers, the luscious muscadine.

Yet round thee hangs the same sweet spirit still!
 Thou art among these hills a sacred spot,
As if shut out from all the clouds of ill
 That gloom so darkly o'er the human lot.
 On thy green breast the world I quite forgot—

Its stern contentions—its dark grief and care,
And I breathed freeer, deeper, and blushed not
At old emotions long, long stifled there,
Which sprang once more to life in thy calm, loving air.

I saw the last bright gleam of sunset play
On Yonah's lofty head: all quiet grew
Thy bosom, which beneath the shadows lay
Of the surrounding mountains; deeper blue
Fell on their mighty summits; evening threw
Her veil o'er all, and on her azure brow
A bright star shone; a trusting form I drew
Yet closer to my side; above, below,
Within were peace and hope life may not often know!

Thou loveliest of earth's valleys! fare thee well!
Nor is the parting pangless to my soul.
Youth, hope and happiness with thee shall dwell,
Unsullied Nature hold o'er thee control,
And years still leave thee beauteous as they roll.
Oh! I could linger with thee! yet this spell
Must break, e'en as upon my heart it stole,
And found a weakness there I may not tell—
An anxious life, a troubled future claim me! fare thee well!

LETTER IV.

Clarksville, Georgia, April, 1848.

The little village where I am now staying is decidedly the most interesting in the northern part of Georgia. There is nothing particularly fine about its buildings, and it only contains some three hundred inhabitants, but it commands a magnificent prospect of two ranges of the Alleghany Mountains. It is remarkable for the healthfulness of its climate, and is the summer resort of between forty and fifty of the most wealthy and accomplished families of Georgia and South Carolina, a number of whom have erected and are erecting elegant country seats in its immediate vicinity. It contains a mineral spring, which is said to have saved the lives of many individuals; and it patronizes two hotels, where the tourist may obtain all the luxuries of the North as well as the South, and in a style which must gratify and astonish him, when he remembers that he has reached the end of carriage travelling, and is on the confines of an almost impassable wilderness. The water-power in its neighborhood would supply at least fifty factories, and it yields more than a sufficient quantity of iron ore to furnish constant employment to an extensive smelting establishment and furnace. Its soil is of the best quality, and yields in great abundance every variety of produce peculiar to a temperate climate. But the chief attraction of

Clarksville is, that it is the centre of some of the most romantic scenery in the world, and the stopping-place for all those who visit Nacoochee Valley, Yonah Mountain, the Tuccoah Cascade, Tallulah Falls, and Tray Mountain. The first two curiosities alluded to have already been described, and I now purpose to introduce to my reader the peculiar and beautiful Cascade of Tuccoah, reserving the two other marvels of nature for future letters.

The Tuccoah is a very small stream—a mere brooklet, and for the most part is not at all distinguished for any other quality than those belonging to a thousand other sparkling streams of this region; but, in its oceanward course, it performs one leap which has given it a reputation. On account of this leap the aborigines christened it with the name of *Tuccoah*, or *the beautiful*. To see this cascade, in your mind's eye, (and I here partly quote the language of one who could fully appreciate its beauty,) imagine a sheer precipice of gray and rugged rock, one hundred and eighty-six feet high, with a little quiet lake at its base, surrounded by sloping masses of granite and tall shadowy trees. From the overhanging lips of this cliff, aloft, between your upturned eyes and the sky comes a softly flowing stream. After making a joyous leap it breaks into a shower of heavy spray, and scatters its drops more and more widely and minute, until, in little more than a drizzling mist, it scatters the smooth, moss-covered stones lying immediately beneath. All the way up the sides of this precipice cling, wherever space is afforded, little tufts of moss and delicate vines and creepers, contrasting beautifully with the solid granite. There is no stunning noise of falling waters, but only a dripping, pattering, plashing in the lake; a murmuring sound, which must be very grateful during the noontide heat

of a summer day. There comes also a soft cool breeze, constantly from the foot of the precipice, caused by the falling shower, and this ripples the surface of the pool and gently agitates the leaves around and overhead.

Connected with the Cascade of Tuccoah is an Indian tradition, which was related to me by a gentleman connected with the Georgia University, who obtained it from a Cherokee Chief. The occurrence is said to be well authenticated, and runneth in this wise: A short time previous to the Revolution, the Cherokees were waging a very bitter warfare against a powerful tribe of Indians who dwelt in the country of the Potomac. During one of their pitched battles, it so happened that the Cherokees made captive about a dozen of their enemies, whom they brought into their own country safely bound. Their intention was to sacrifice the prisoners; but, as they wished the ceremony to be particularly imposing, on account of the fame of the captives, it was resolved to postpone the sacrifice until the following moon. In the meantime the Cherokee braves went forth to battle again, while the prisoners, now more securely bound than ever, were left in a large wigwam near Tuccoah, in the especial charge of an old woman, who was noted for her savage patriotism.

Day followed day, and, as the unfortunate enemies lay in the lodge of the old woman, she dealt out to them a scanty supply of food and water. They besought the woman to release them, and offered her the most valuable of Indian bribes, but she held her tongue and remained faithful to her trust. It was now the morning of a pleasant day, when an Indian boy called at the door of the old woman's lodge and told her that he had seen a party of their enemies in a neighboring valley, and he thought it probable

that they had come to rescue their fellows. The woman heard this intelligence in silence, but bit her lip in anger and defiance. On re-entering her lodge another appeal for freedom was made, and the prisoners were delighted to see a smile playing upon the countenance of their keeper. She told them she had relented, and was willing to let them escape their promised doom, but it must be on certain conditions. They were first to give into her hands all their personal effects, which she would bury under the lodge. She did not wish to be discovered, and they must therefore depart at the dead of night. She did not wish them to know how to find their way back to the lodge, whence they might see fit to take away her reward, and she therefore desired that they should be blindfolded, and consent to her leading them about two miles through a thick wood, into an open country, when she would release them. The prisoners gladly consented; and, while they were suffering themselves to be stripped of their robes and weapons, a heavy cloud canopied the sky, as if heralding a storm. At the hour of midnight loud peals of thunder bellowed through the firmament, and terribly flashed the lightning. The night and the contemplated deed were admirably suited, thought the warriors, and so thought the woman also. She placed leathern bands around the eyes of her captives; and, having severed the thongs which confined their feet, bade them follow whither she might lead. They were connected with each other by iron withes; and so the woman led them to their promised freedom. Intricate, and winding, and tedious was the way; but not a murmur was uttered, nor a word spoken. Now has the strange procession reached a level spot of earth, and the men step proudly on their way. Now have they reached the precipice of Tuc-

coah; and, as the woman walks to the very edge, she makes a sudden wheel, and, one after the other, are the poor captives launched into the abyss below. A loud wail of triumph echoes through the air from the lips of the woman-fiend, and, with the groans of the dying in her ears, and the very lightning in her path, does she retrace her steps to her lodge to seek repose, and then on the morrow to proclaim her cruel and unnatural deed.

In the bottom of the Tuccoah pool may now be gathered small fragments of a white material, resembling soap-stone, and many people allege that these are the remains of the Indian captives who perished at the foot of the precipice.

LETTER V.

Tallulah Falls, Georgia, April, 1848.

As a natural curiosity the *Falls of Tallulah* are on a par with the River Saguenay and the Falls of Niagara. They had been described to me in the most glowing and enthusiastic manner, and yet the reality far exceeds the scene which I had conceived. They have filled me with astonishment, and created a feeling strong enough almost to induce me to remain within hearing of their roar forever.

The Cherokee word *Tallulah* or *Tarrurah* signifies *the terrible*, and was originally applied to the river of that name on account of its fearful falls. This river rises among the Alleghany mountains, and is a tributary of the Savannah. Its entire course lies through a mountain land, and in every particular it is a mountain stream, narrow, deep, clear, cold, and subject to every variety of mood. During the first half of its career it winds among the hills as if in uneasy joy, and then for several miles it wears a placid appearance, and you can scarcely hear the murmur of its waters. Soon, tiring of this peaceful course, however, it narrows itself for an approaching contest, and runs through a chasm whose walls, about four miles in length, are for the most part perpendicular; and, after making within the space of half a mile a number of leaps as the chasm deepens, it

settles into a turbulent and angry mood, and so continues for a mile and a half further, until it leaves the chasm and regains its wonted character. The Falls of Tallulah, properly speaking, are five in number, and have been christened *Lodora, Tempesta, Oceana, Honcon,* and *the Serpentine.* Their several heights are said to be forty-five feet, one hundred, one hundred and twenty, fifty, and thirty feet, making, in connection with the accompanying rapids, a descent of at least four hundred feet within the space of half a mile. At this point the stream is particularly winding, and the cliffs of solid granite on either side, which are perpendicular, vary in height from six hundred to nine hundred feet, while the mountains which back the cliffs reach an elevation of perhaps fifteen hundred feet. Many of the pools are very large and very deep, and the walls and rocks in their immediate vicinity are always green with the most luxuriant of mosses. The vegetation of the whole chasm is in fact particularly rich and varied ; for you may here find not only the pine, but specimens of every variety of the more tender trees, together with lichens, and vines, and flowers, which would keep the botanist employed for half a century. Up to the present time, only four paths have been discovered leading to the margin of the water, and to make either of these descents requires much of the nerve and courage of the samphire-gatherer. Through this immense gorge a strong wind is ever blowing, and the sunlight never falls upon the cataracts without forming beautiful rainbows, which contrast strangely with the surrounding gloom and horror ; and the roar of the waterfalls, eternally ascending to the sky, comes to the ear like the voice of God calling upon man to wonder and admire.

Of the more peculiar features which I have met with in

the Tallulah chasm the following are the only ones which have yet been christened, viz.: the Devil's Pulpit, the Devil's Dwelling, the Eagle's Nest, the Deer Leap, Hawthorn's Pool, and Hanck's Sliding Place.

The Devil's Pulpit is a double-headed and exceedingly ragged cliff, which actually hangs over the ravine, and estimated to be over six hundred feet high. While standing upon the brow of this precipice I saw a number of buzzards sitting upon the rocks below, and appearing like a flock of blackbirds. While looking at them the thought came into my mind that I would startle them from their fancied security by throwing a stone among them. I did throw the stone, and with all my might too, but, instead of going across the ravine, as I supposed it would, it fell out of my sight, and apparently at the very base of the cliff upon which I was standing. This little incident gave me a realizing sense of the immense width and depth of the chasm. While upon this cliff also, with my arms clasped around a small pine tree, an eagle came sailing up the chasm in mid air, and, as he cast his eye upward at my insignificant form, he uttered a loud shriek as if in anger at my temerity, and continued on his way, swooping above the spray of the waterfalls.

The *Devil's Dwelling* is a cave of some twenty feet in depth, which occupies a conspicuous place near the summit of a precipice overlooking the Honcon Fall. Near its outlet is a singular rock, which resembles (from the opposite side of the gorge) the figure of a woman in a sitting posture, who is said to be the wife or better-half of the devil. I do not *believe* this story, and cannot therefore endorse the prevailing opinion.

The *Eagle's Nest* is a rock which projects from the

brow of a cliff reputed to be seven hundred feet high, and perpendicular. The finest view of this point is from the margin of the water, where it is grand beyond compare. To describe it with the pen were utterly impossible, but it was just such a scene as would have delighted the lamented Cole, and by a kindred genius alone can it ever be placed on the canvas.

The *Deer Leap* is the highest cliff in the whole chasm, measuring about nine hundred feet, and differs from its fellows in two particulars. From summit to bottom it is almost without a fissure or an evergreen, and remarkably smooth; and over it, in the most beautiful manner imaginable, tumbles a tiny stream, which scatters upon the rocks below with infinite prodigality; the purest of diamonds and pearls appearing to be woven into wreaths of foam. It obtained its name from the circumstance that a deer was once pursued to this point by a hound, and in its terror, cleared a pathway through the air, and perished in the depths below.

Hawthorn's Pool derives its name from the fact that in its apparently soundless waters a young and accomplished English clergyman lost his life while bathing; and *Hanck's Sliding Place* is so called because a native of this region once slipped off of the rock into a sheet of foam, but by the kindness of Providence he was rescued from his perilous situation not much injured, but immensely frightened.

But of all the scenes which I have been privileged to enjoy in the Tallulah chasm, the most glorious and superb was witnessed in the night time. For several days previous to my coming here the woods had been on fire, and I was constantly on the watch for a night picture of a burning forest. On one occasion, as I was about retiring, I saw

a light in the direction of the Falls, and concluded that I would take a walk to the Devil's Pulpit, which was distant from my tarrying place some hundred and fifty yards. Soon as I reached there I felt convinced that the fire would soon be in plain view, for I was on the western side of the gorge, and the wind was blowing from the eastward In a very few moments my anticipations were realized, for I saw the flame licking up the dead leaves which covered the ground, and also stealing up the trunk of every dry tree in its path. A warm current of air was now wafted to my cheek by the breeze, and I discovered with intense satisfaction that an immense dead pine which hung over the opposite precipice (and whose dark form I had noticed distinctly pictured against the crimson background) had been reached by the flame, and in another moment it was entirely in a blaze. The excitement which now took possession of my mind was absolutely painful; and, as I threw my arms around a small tree, and peered into the horrible chasm, my whole frame shook with an indescribable emotion. The magnificent torch directly in front of me did not seem to have any effect upon the surrounding darkness, but threw a ruddy and death-like glow upon every object in the bottom of the gorge. A flock of vultures which were roosting far down in the ravine were frightened out of their sleep, and in their dismay, as they attempted to rise, flew against the cliffs and amongst the trees, until they finally disappeared; and a number of bats and other winged creatures were winnowing their way in every direction. The deep black pools beneath were enveloped in a more intense blackness, while the foam and spray of a neighboring fall were made a thousand-fold more beautiful than before. The vines, and lichens, and mosses seemed to cling more

closely than usual to their parent rocks; and when an occasional ember fell from its great height far down, and still further down into the abyss below, it made me dizzy and I retreated from my commanding position. In less than twenty minutes from that time the fire was exhausted, and the pall of night had settled upon the lately so brilliant chasm, and no vestige of the truly marvellous scene remained but an occasional wreath of smoke fading away into the upper air.

During my stay at the Falls of Tallulah I made every effort to obtain an Indian legend or two connected with them, and it was my good fortune to hear one which has never yet been printed. It was originally obtained by the white man who first discovered the Falls from the Cherokees, who lived in this region at the time. It is in substance as follows: Many generations ago it so happened that several famous hunters, who had wandered from the West towards what is now the Savannah river, in search of game, never returned to their camping grounds. In process of time the curiosity as well as the fears of the nation were excited, and an effort was made to ascertain the cause of their singular disappearance. Whereupon a party of medicine-men were deputed to make a pilgrimage towards the great river. They were absent a whole moon, and, on returning to their friends, they reported that they had discovered a dreadful fissure in an unknown part of the country, through which a mountain torrent took its way with a deafening noise. They said that it was an exceedingly wild place, and that its inhabitants were a species of *little men and women*, who dwelt in the crevices of the rocks and in the grottoes under the waterfalls. They had attempted by every artifice in their power to hold a council with the lit-

tle people, but all in vain; and, from the shrieks they frequently uttered, the medicine-men knew that they were the enemies of the Indian race; and, therefore, it was concluded in the nation at large that the long lost hunters had been decoyed to their death in the dreadful gorge which they called Tallulah. In view of this little legend, it is worthy of remark that the Cherokee nation, previous to their departure for the distant West, always avoided the Falls of Tallulah, and were seldom found hunting or fishing in their vicinity.

P. S. Since writing the above, I have met with another local poem by Henry R. Jackson, Esq., which contains so much of the true spirit of poetry, that I cannot refrain from giving it to my readers. It was inspired by the roar of Tallulah, and is as follows :—

Tallulah.

But hark! beneath yon hoary precipice,
The rush of mightier waters, as they pour
In foaming torrents through the dark abyss
Which echoes back the thunders of their roar.
Approach the frightful gorge! and gazing o'er,
What mad emotions through their bosoms thrill!
Hast ever seen so dread a sight before?
TALLULAH! by that name we hail thee still,
And own that thou art rightly called THE TERRIBLE!

In vain o'er thee shall glow with wild delight,
The painter's eye, and voiceless still shall be
The poet's tongue, who from this giddy height
Shall kindle in thine awful minstrelsy!
Thou art too mighty in thy grandeur—we

Too weak to give fit utterance to the soul!
Thy billows mock us with their tempest glee,
As thundering on, while countless ages roll,
Thou scornest man's applause alike with man's control!

Yet standing here where mountain eagles soar,
Among these toppling crags, to plant their nest,
I catch an inspiration from thy roar,
Which will not let my spirit be at rest.
I cast me down upon the massive breast
Of this huge rock, that lifts to meet the blast,
Far, far above thy foam, his granite crest,
And eager thoughts come gathering thick and fast,
The voices of the future blending with the past!

I gaze across the yawning gorge and seem
Once more to see upon yon heights that rear
Their summits up to catch the sunset gleam,
The red man of the wilderness appear,
With bounding step, and bosom broad and bare,
And painted face, and figure lithe and tall,
Wild as surrounding nature; and I hear
From yonder precipice his whoop and call,
That mingle fiercely with the roaring water-fall!

But lo! he pauses, for he sees *thee* now,
Dread cataract!—he stands entranced—his yell
Is hushed; appalled he looks where far below,
Thy waters boil with a tumultuous swell.
Thou glorious orator of Nature! well
May his rude bosom own the majesty
Of thy dread eloquence; he hears the knell
Of human things—he bends the suppliant knee,
To the Great Spirit of THE TERRIBLE in thee.

Once more I look!—the dusky form has gone—
Passed with the onward course of time, and passed

To come no more ; perhaps a king upon
Yon height he sleeps, rocked by the winter's blast
In couch all regal, where dead hands have cast
His glorious bones the nearest to the stars,
And left him there to rest in peace at last,
Forgetful of his glory, scalps and scars—
The unsung Hector of a hundred bloody wars.

Again I gaze, and other forms appear,
Of milder mien and far more gentle grace,
And softer tones are falling on my ear ;
And yet, methinks, less kindred with the place.
Another, and (it may be) nobler race
Have made these hills their own, and they draw near
With kindling spirits, yet with cautious pace;
Youth, age and wisdom, with his brow of care,
And joyous beauty, that has never wept a tear.

And through the lapse of many ages they
Shall come ; year after year to thee shall bring
The searcher after knowledge, and the gay
Who sport through life as though a morn in spring ;
And tears shall fall, and the light laugh shall ring
Beside thee, and the lonely heart shall seek
Relief from its eternal sorrowing—
And all shall feel upon their spirits break,
Thoughts wonderful ; emotions which they may not speak.

I turn towards the coming time and hear
The voice of a great people which shall dwell
Among these mountains, free as their own air,
And chainless as thy current's ceaseless swell.
Behold them growing into power ! They fell
The old primeval forests which have stood
For ages in the valleys ; they dispel
The shades from Nature's face, and thickly strewed,
Their villages spring up amid the solitude.

I look again, and I behold them not;
Silence resumes once more her ancient reign.
A solitary form stands on the spot,
Where mine had stood; around on hill and plain,
The palace crumbles, and the gorgeous fane
Sinks into dust; he weeps above the tomb
Of human pride, and feels that it is vain;
Yet shall thy voice arise amid the gloom
Of silent hearths and cities, scornful of their doom.

I look once more: behold 'tis changed again,
And yet 'tis unchanged! Earth has upward shot
Her twigs from naked mountain, vale and plain;
How rankly have they grown above the spot,
Where cities crumble, and their builders rot!
Again the forest moans beneath the blast,
The eagle finds on mountain, cliff and grot,
Once more his eyrie undisturbed; the vast
And melancholy wilderness o'er all is cast.

And lo! upon the spot where I had stood,
A second form—how like to mine! has ta'en
His lonely place, and hears the solitude
Return thy stunning anthem back again,
Like distant roarings of some mighty main;
The earth around lies in her primal dress:
And far above, just entering on her wane,
The full round moon with not a ray the less,
Looks calmly forth as now, upon the wilderness.

He treads the earth, nor dreams that he has trod
On human dust. The oak that o'er him waves
So proudly, tells him not how, through the sod,
Its roots sucked nourishment from human graves.
The renovated stream its channel laves
Beside his feet as freshly as of old;
Its moist bank not a lingering record saves
Of those who dried its sources; flowers unfold
Their tints, nor tell how they have fed on human mould.

Now from the broad expanse his eye surveys,
Ambition! summon forth thy votaries!
Whose eagle vision drank the noontide blaze,
Whose eagle pinions fanned the highest breeze.
Power! thou that gloried'st in the bending knees
Of millions of God's humbled creatures—seek
Thy favorites now, who strode through bloody seas
To thrones, it may be, and upon the weak,
Bade human passion all her vengeance wreak!

Bid them arise! stand forth! each in his place
From the broad waste, to greet the gazer's sight
With bright insignia, which in life did grace
The brow, or give the bounding heart delight.
Arise! each to the stature of his might,
And tell of how he lived and how he died!
Say! comes a single voice upon the night?
Rises a single form above the common tide?
Ambition! Glory! Power! oh! where do ye abide?

Speak, Suffering! call thy pallid sons!
And Poverty! thy millions marshal forth!
Thy starving millions, with their rags and groans,
Who knew hell's tortures on God's smiling earth!
Name o'er thy thoughtless legions, reckless Mirth?
And Disappointment! with thy sable brow,
Summon thy slaves of great or little worth!
And Suicide! thou child of darkest woe,
Speak to thy bleeding victims, thou, who laid'st them low!

Behold they come not! Still he stands alone—
He gazes upward to the midnight sky,
The same dim vault where orbs as brightly shone,
When watched by the Chaldean's wakeful eye,
As now they shine; his dreamings are of high
And holy things; to him the earth is young—
The heavens are young; in joyous infancy
A nation buds around—to whom belong
No past, no memories, but a future bright and strong.

LETTER VI.

Tallulah Falls, Georgia, April, 1848.

The subject of my present letter is Adam Vandever, "the Hunter of Tallulah." His fame reached my ears soon after arriving at this place, and, having obtained a guide, I paid him a visit at his residence, which is planted directly at the mouth of the Tallulah chasm. He lives in a log-cabin, occupying the centre of a small valley, through which the Tallulah river winds its wayward course. It is completely hemmed in on all sides by wild and abrupt mountains, and one of the most romantic and beautiful nooks imaginable. Vandever is about sixty years of age, small in stature, has a regular built weasel face, a small gray eye, and wears a long white beard. He was born in South Carolina, spent his early manhood in the wilds of Kentucky, and the last thirty years of his life in the wilderness of Georgia. By way of a frolic, he took a part in the Creek war, and is said to have killed more Indians than any other white man in the army. In the battle of Ottassee alone, he is reported to have sent his rifle-ball through the hearts of twenty poor heathen, merely because they had an undying passion for their native hills, which they could not bear to leave for an unknown wilderness. But Vandever aimed his rifle at the command of his country, and of course the charge of cold-blooded butchery does not rest upon his

head. He is now living with his *third* wife, and claims to be the father of *over thirty children*, only five of whom, however, are living under his roof, the remainder being dead or scattered over the world. During the summer months he tills, with his own hand, the few acres of land which constitute his domain. His live stock consists of a mule and some half dozen of goats, together with a number of dogs.

On inquiring into his forest life, he gave me, among others, the following particulars. When the hunting season commences, early in November, he supplies himself with every variety of shooting materials, steel-traps, and a comfortable stock of provisions, and, placing them upon his mule, starts for some wild region among the mountains, where he remains until the following spring. The shanty which he occupies during this season is of the rudest character, with one side always open, as he tells me, for the purpose of having an abundance of fresh air. In killing wild animals he pursues but two methods, called "fire-lighting" and "still-hunting." His favorite game is the deer, but he is not particular, and secures the fur of every four-legged creature which may happen to cross his path. The largest number of skins that he ever brought home at one time was six hundred, among which were those of the bear, the black and gray wolf, the panther, the wild-cat, the fox, the coon, and some dozen other varieties. He computes the entire number of deer that he has killed in his lifetime at four thousand. When spring arrives, and he purposes to return to his valley home, he packs his furs upon his old mule, and, seating himself upon the pile of plunder, makes a bee-line out of the wilderness. And by those who have seen him in this homeward-bound condition, I am told that he

presents one of the most curious and romantic pictures imaginable. While among the mountains, his beast subsists upon whatever it may happen to glean in its forest rambles, and, when the first supply of his own provisions is exhausted, he usually contents himself with wild game, which he is often compelled to devour unaccompanied with bread or salt. His mule is the smallest and most miserable looking creature of the kind that I ever saw, and glories in the singular name of "The Devil and Tom Walker." When Vandever informed me of this fact, which he did with a self-satisfied air, I told him that the first portion of the mule's name was more applicable to himself than to the dumb beast; whereupon he "grinned horribly a ghastly smile," as if I had paid him a compliment. Old Vandever is an illiterate man, and when I asked him to give me his opinion of President Polk, he replied: "I never seed the Governor of this State; for, when he came to this country some years ago, I was off on 'tother side of the ridge, shooting deer. I voted for the General, and that's all I know about him." Very well! and this, thought I, is one of the freemen of our land, who help to elect our rulers!

On questioning my hunter friend with regard to some of his adventures, he commenced a rigmarole narrative, which would have lasted a whole month had I not politely requested him to keep his mouth closed while I took a portrait of him in pencil. His stories all bore a strong family likeness, but were evidently to be relied on, and proved conclusively that the man knew not what it was to fear.

As specimens of the whole, I will outline a few. On one occasion he came up to a large gray wolf, into whose head he discharged a ball. The animal did not drop, but made its way into an adjoining cavern and disappeared.

Vandever waited awhile at the opening, and as he could not see or hear his game, he concluded that it had ceased to breathe, whereupon he fell upon his hands and knees, and entered the cave. On reaching the bottom, he found the wolf alive, when a "clinch fight" ensued, and the hunter's knife completely severed the heart of the animal. On dragging out the dead wolf into the sunlight, it was found that his lower jaw had been broken, which was probably the reason why he had not succeeded in destroying the hunter.

At one time, when he was out of ammunition, his dogs fell upon a large bear, and it so happened that the latter got one of the former in his power, and was about to squeeze it to death. This was a sight the hunter could not endure, so he unsheathed his huge hunting-knife and assaulted the black monster. The bear tore off nearly every rag of his clothing, and in making his first plunge with the knife he completely cut off two of his own fingers instead of injuring the bear. He was now in a perfect frenzy of pain and rage, and in making another effort succeeded to his satisfaction, and gained the victory. That bear weighed three hundred and fifty pounds.

On another occasion he had fired at a large buck near the brow of a precipice some thirty feet high, which hangs over one of the pools in the Tallulah river. On seeing the buck drop, he took it for granted that he was about to die, when he approached the animal for the purpose of cutting its throat. To his great surprise, however, the buck suddenly sprung to his feet and made a tremendous rush at the hunter with a view of throwing him off the ledge. But what was more remarkable, the animal succeeded in its effort, though not until Vandever had obtained a fair hold of the buck's antlers, when the twain performed a somerset

into the pool below. The buck made its escape, and Vandever was not seriously injured in any particular. About a month subsequent to that time he killed a buck, which had a bullet wound in the lower part of its neck, whereupon he concluded that he had finally triumphed over the animal which had given him the unexpected ducking.

But the most remarkable escape which old Vandever ever experienced happened on this wise. He was encamped upon one of the loftiest mountains in Union county. It was near the twilight hour, and he had heard the howl of a wolf. With a view of ascertaining the direction whence it came, he climbed upon an immense boulder-rock, (weighing perhaps fifty tons,) which stood on the very brow of a steep hill side. While standing upon this boulder he suddenly felt a swinging sensation, and to his astonishment he found that it was about to make a fearful plunge into the ravine half a mile below him. As fortune would have it, the limb of an oak tree drooped over the rock; and, as the rock started from its tottlish foundation, he seized the limb, and thereby saved his life. The dreadful crashing of the boulder as it descended the mountain side came to the hunter's ear while he was suspended in the air, and by the time it had reached the bottom he dropped himself *on the very spot* which had been vacated by the boulder. Vandever said that this was the only time in his life when he had been really frightened; and he also added, that for one day after this escape he did not care a finger's snap for the finest game in the wilderness.

While on my visit to Vandever's cabin, one of his boys came home from a fishing expedition, and on examining his fish I was surprised to find a couple of *shad* and three or four *striped bass* or *rock-fish*. They had been taken in the

Tallulah just below the chasm, by means of a wicker-net, and at a point distant from the ocean at least two hundred and fifty miles. I had been informed that the Tallulah abounded in trout, but I was not prepared to find salt-water fish in this remote mountain wilderness.

Since I have introduced the above youthful Vandever to my readers, I will record a single one of his deeds, which ought to give him a fortune, or at least an education. The incident occurred when he was in his twelfth year. He and a younger brother had been gathering berries on a mountain side, and were distant from home about two miles. While carelessly tramping down the weeds and bushes, the younger boy was bitten by a rattlesnake on the calf of his leg. In a few moments thereafter the unhappy child fell to the ground in great pain, and the pair were of course in unexpected tribulation. The elder boy, having succeeded in killing the rattlesnake, conceived the idea, as the only alternative, of carrying his little brother home upon his back. And this deed did the noble fellow accomplish. For two long miles did he carry his heavy burden, over rocks and down the water-courses, and in an hour after he had reached his father's cabin the younger child was dead; and the heroic boy was in a state of insensibility from the fatigue and heat which he had experienced. He recovered, however, and is now apparently in the enjoyment of good health, though when I fixed my admiring eyes upon him it seemed to me that he was far from being strong, and it was evident that a shadow rested upon his brow.

LETTER VII.

Trail Mountain, Georgia, May, 1848.

I now write from near the summit of the highest mountain in Georgia. I obtained my first view of this peak while in the village of Clarksville, and it presented such a commanding appearance, that I resolved to surmount it, on my way to the North, although my experience has proven that climbing high mountains is always more laborious than profitable. I came here on the back of a mule, and my guide and companion on the occasion was the principal proprietor of Nacoochee valley, Major Edward Williams. While ascending the mountain, which occupied about seven hours, (from his residence,) the venerable gentleman expatiated at considerable length on the superb scenery to be witnessed from its summit, and then informed me that he had just established a dairy on the mountain, which, it was easy to see, had become his hobby. He described the "ranges" of the mountains as affording an abundance of the sweetest food for cattle, and said that he had already sent to his dairy somewhere between fifty and eighty cows, and was intending soon to increase the number to one hundred. He told me that his dairyman was an excellent young man from Vermont, named Joseph E. Hubbard, to whom he was indebted for the original idea of establishing the dairy. While journeying through this region the young man chanced to

stop at the major's house, and though they were perfect strangers, they conversed upon matters connected with farming, and soon became acquainted; and the stranger having made known the fact that he knew how to make butter and cheese, a bargain was struck, which has resulted in the establishment already mentioned. The Williams dairy is said to be the only one in the entire State of Georgia, and it is worthy of remark, in this connection, that Major Williams (as well as his dairyman) is a native of New-England. He has been an exile from Yankee land for upwards of twenty years, and though nearly seventy years of age, it appears that his natural spirit of enterprise remains in full vigor.

Trail Mountain was so named by the Cherokees, from the fact that they once had a number of *trails* leading to the summit, to which point they were in the habit of ascending for the purpose of discovering the camp-fires of their enemies during the existence of hostilities. It is the king of the Blue Ridge, and reported to be five thousand feet above the waters of the surrounding country, and perhaps six thousand feet above the level of the ocean. A carpet of green grass and weeds extends to the very top, and as the trees are small, as well as "few and far between," the lover of extensive scenery has a fine opportunity of gratifying his taste. I witnessed a sunset from this great watch-tower of the South, and I know not that I was ever before more deeply impressed with the grandeur of a landscape scene. The horizon formed an unbroken circle, but I could distinctly see that in one direction alone (across South Carolina and part of Georgia) extended a comparatively level country, while the remaining three-quarters of the space around me appeared to be a wilderness of moun-

tains. The grandest display was towards the north, and here it seemed to me that I could count at least twenty distinct ranges, fading away to the sky, until the more remote range melted into a monotonous line. No cities or towns came within the limit of my vision ; no, nor even an occasional wreath of smoke, to remind me that human hearts were beating in the unnumbered valleys. A crimson hue covered the sky, but it was without a cloud to cheer the prospect, and the solemn shadow which rested upon the mountains was too deep to partake of a single hue from the departing sun. Grandeur and gloom, like twin spirits, seemed to have subdued the world, causing the pulse of nature to cease its accustomed throb. "At one stride came the dark," and, as there was no moon, I retreated from the peak with pleasure, and sought the rude cabin, where I was to spend the night. While doing this, the distant howl of a wolf came to my ear, borne upward on the quiet air from one of the deep ravines leading to the base of the mountain.

As I was the guest of my friends Williams and Hubbard, I whiled away the evening in their society, asking and answering a thousand questions. Among the matters touched upon in our conversation was a certain mysterious "water-spout," of which I had heard a great deal among the people in my journeying, and which was said to have fallen upon Trail Mountain. I again inquired into the particulars, and Major Williams replied as follows:

"This water-spout story has always been a great botheration to me. The circumstance occurred several years ago. A number of hunters were spending the night in the very ravine where this shanty now stands, when, about midnight, they heard a tremendous roaring in the air, and a large torrent of water fell upon their camp and swept it,

with all its effects and its inmates, about a dozen yards from the spot where they had planted their poles. There were three hunters, and one of them was severely injured on the head by the water, and all of them completely drenched. They were of course much alarmed at the event, and concluded that a spring farther up the mountain had probably broken away; but when morning came they could find no evidences of a spring, and every where above their camping place the ground was perfectly dry, while on the lower side it was completely saturated. They were now perplexed to a marvellous degree, and returned to the lower country impressed with the idea that a water-spout had burst over their heads."

I of course attempted no explanation of this phenomenon, but Mr. Hubbard gave it as his opinion that if the affair actually did occur, it originated from a whirlwind, which might have taken up the water from some neighboring river, and dashed it by the merest accident upon the poor hunters. But this reasoning seemed to me like getting "out of the frying pan into the fire;" whereupon I concluded to "tell the tale as 'twas told to me," for the especial benefit of Professor Espy.

But to return to the dairy, which is unquestionably the chief attraction (though far from being a romantic one) connected with Trail Mountain. Heretofore a cheese establishment has been associated in my mind with broad meadow lands, spacious and well-furnished out-houses, and a convenient market. But here we have a dairy on the top of a mountain, distant from the first farm-house some fifteen miles, and inaccessible by any conveyance but that of a mule or well-trained horse. The bells of more than half a hundred cows are echoing along the mountain side;

and, instead of clover, they are feeding upon the luxuriant weed of the wilderness; instead of cool cellars, we have here a hundred tin pans arranged upon tables in a log cabin, into which a cool spring pours its refreshing treasure; instead of a tidy and matronly housewife to superintend the turning of the curd, we have an enterprising young Yankee, a veritable Green Mountain boy; and instead of pretty milkmaids, the inferiors of this establishment are huge negroes, and all of the masculine gender. And this is the establishment which supplies the people of Georgia with cheese, and the material out of which the scientific caterer manufactures the palatable Welsh Rabbit.

LETTER VIII.

Murphy, North Carolina, May, 1848.

The distance from Hubbard's Cabin, on Trail Mountain, to the Owassa river, in a direct line, is eight miles, but by the ordinary mule-route it is thirteen. In coming to this river I took the direct route, albeit my only guide was an ancient Indian trail. My friend Hubbard doubted whether I could make the trip alone, but I was anxious to save time and labor, so I determined on trying the experiment. I shouldered my knapsack and started immediately after an early breakfast, and for a distance of two miles every thing turned out to my entire satisfaction. I was now standing upon the extreme summit of the Blue Ridge, and within a stone's throw of two springs which empty their several waters into the Gulf of Mexico and the Ohio river. While stopping here to obtain a little breath, I discovered a large spot of bare earth, which I took to be a deer yard, and directly across the middle of it the fresh tracks of a large wolf. I had no gun with me, and this discovery made me a little nervous, which resulted, as I proceeded on my journey, in my losing the trail upon which I had started. I soon came to a brook, however, which rushed down an immense ravine at an angle of forty-five degrees, and I continued my way feeling quite secure. My course lay down, down, down, and then, as I wandered

from the brook, it was up, up, up. At the rate that I travelled I knew that I ought to reach my place of destination in at at least one hour, but four hours elapsed and I reluctantly came to the conclusion that I was most decidedly lost, and that, too, among what I fancied to be the wildest and most lonely mountains on the face of the earth. Then came the thought of spending the night in the wilderness, alone and unprotected, to be destroyed by the wild animals or to be starved to death. I resolved, however, to continue along the brook, knowing that it must come out "somewhere;" and, as I was by this time in a most painful state of excitement, I clambered up the cliffs and ran down the hills at what now appears to me to have been a fearful rate. The sun was excessively hot, and at every rivulet that I crossed I stopped to slake my thirst. The brook was constantly making a new turn, and leaping over ledges of rocks more than a hundred feet high, and every new bluff that I saw (and there seemed to be no end to them) began to shoot a pang to my bewildered brain. At one time I startled a herd of deer from a cool ravine, where they were spending the noontide hours; and on one occasion I was within a single foot of stepping on a rattlesnake, and when I heard his fearful rattle I made a leap which would have astonished even Sands, Lent & Co., or any other circus magicians. It was now the middle of the afternoon, and my blood seemed to have reached the temperature of boiling heat; my heart began to palpitate, and I came to the conclusion that the critics would never again have an opportunity of doubting my adventures in the wilderness. Just in the nick of time, however, I heard the howling music of a pack of hounds, and in a few moments a beautiful doe and some half a dozen dogs shot across my path

like a "rushing mighty wind." This little incident led me to believe that I was not very far from a settlement, and had a tendency to revive my spirits. The result was that I reached the cottage of an old gentleman named Riley, in the valley of Owassa, just as the sun was setting, where I was treated with the utmost kindness by his consort—having travelled at least twenty miles on account of my mishap. I had lost my appetite, but was persuaded to drink two cups of coffee and then retire to bed. I slept until daybreak, without being visited by an unpleasant dream, and arose on the following morning a new man. On the following day I travelled down the Owassa valley a distance of thirty miles, until I reached the very pretty place where I am now tarrying. The Cherokee word Owassa signifies *the main river, or the largest of the tributaries:* and the paraphrase of this name into *Hiowassee* by the map-makers is only a ridiculous blunder. So I have been informed, at any rate, by one of the oldest Cherokees now living. The Owassa is a tributary of the noble Tennessee, and is as clear, beautiful, rapid and picturesque a mountain river as I have ever seen. At Wiley's cottage it is perhaps one hundred feet wide, and at this point it is not far from one hundred and fifty yards. It is quite circuitous in its course, and the valley through which it runs is narrow, but very fertile and pretty well cultivated. The people live almost exclusively in log cabins, and appear to be intelligent and moral, though apparently destitute of all enterprise.

The only novelty that I noticed on the road to this place was the spot known as *Fort Embree.* The only evidences that there ever was a fortification here are a breastwork of timber, a lot of demolished pickets, and two or three block-houses, which are now in a dilapidated condition.

The site is a commanding one, and takes in some of the grandest mountain outlines that I have yet seen. This fort, so called, was made by the General Government for the purpose of herding the poor Cherokees previous to their final banishment into exile—a most humane and christian-like work, indeed! How reluctant the Indians were to leave this beautiful land may be shown by the fact, that a number of women destroyed themselves within this very fort rather than be driven beyond the Mississippi. And a gentleman who saw the Indians, when they were removed, tells me that they were actually driven along the road like a herd of wild and unruly animals, a number of them having been shot down in the vicinity of this place. All these things may have been published, but I have never seen them in print; and I now put them in print with the view of shaming our heartless and cruel Government for its unnatural conduct in times past. The Cherokees were a nation of mountaineers, and, had a wise policy been pursued with regard to them, they might now be chasing the deer upon these mountains, while all the valleys of the land might have been in a state of cultivation, even as they are now. Not only would they have had the happiness of hunting their favorite game upon their native hills, but they might have been educated with more real satisfaction to themselves than they can be in the Far West. In proof of the opinion that they might have lived here in honor and comfort, it may be mentioned that the few Cherokees who were permitted to remain in Carolina, are now considered the most polite and inoffensive of the entire population; and the United States District Attorney residing in Cherokee county informs me, that of five hundred individuals whom he has had to prosecute within the last five years,

only one of them was an Indian, and he was led into his difficulty by a drunken white man. But this is a theme that I could write upon for days, so I will turn to something more germain to my present purpose.

In coming down the valley of Owassa I met with a number of incidents which I fancy worth mentioning. For example, in passing along a certain road in Union county, Georgia, I approached a ricketty log cabin, and was surprised to see the family and all the dogs vacate the premises, as if I had been a personified plague. I was subsequently informed that this was a common habit with the more barbarous people of this region when they see a stranger passing along the road.

Among the characteristic travelling establishments that I met in the above country, was the following: a very small covered wagon, (drawn by one mule and one deformed horse,) which was laden with corn-husks, a few bedclothes, and several rude cooking utensils. Behind this team marched a man and his wife, five boys, and eight girls, and in their rear the skeleton of a cow and four hungry-looking dogs. They had been farming in Union county, but were now on their way into Habersham county in search of a new location. The youngest daughter belonging to this family, as I casually found out by giving her a small piece of money, was *Dorcas Ann Eliza Jane Charlotte* ———. On hearing this startling information I could not wonder that the family were poor, and had a thorny road to pursue through life.

But the most unique incident that I picked up on the day in question may be narrated as follows: I was quietly jogging along the road, when I was startled by the dropping of a snake from a small tree. I stopped to see what

was the matter, and discovered it to be a black snake or racer, and that he had in his mouth the tail end of a scarlet lizard about five inches long. It was evident the snake had some difficulty in swallowing the precious morsel, and while he seemed to be preparing for another effort, I saw the lizard twist its body and bite the snake directly on the back of the head, which caused the latter to loosen his hold. Again did I see the snake attack the lizard, and a second time did the lizard bite the snake, whereupon the serpent gave up the fight, and, while I was hunting for a stick to kill the serpent, both of the reptiles made their escape.

The little village of *Murphy*, whence I date this letter, lies at the junction of the Owassa and Valley rivers, and in point of location is one of the prettiest places in the world. Its Indian name was *Klausuna*, or the *Large Turtle*. It was so called, says a Cherokee legend, on account of its being the *sunning* place of an immense turtle which lived in its vicinity in ancient times. The turtle was particularly famous for its *repelling* power, having been known not to be at all injured by a stroke of lightning. Nothing on earth had power to annihilate the creature; but, on account of the many attempts made to take its life, when it was known to be a harmless and inoffensive creature, it became disgusted with this world, and burrowed its way into the middle of the earth, where it now lives in peace.

In connection with this legend, I may here mention what must be considered a remarkable fact in geology. Running directly across the village of Murphy is a belt of marble, composed of the black, gray, pure white and flesh-colored varieties, which belt also crosses the Owassa river.

Just above this marble causeway the Owassa, for a space of perhaps two hundred feet, is said to be over one hundred feet deep, and at one point, in fact, a bottom has never been found. All this is simple truth, but I have heard the opinion expressed that there is a subterranean communication between this immense hole in Owassa and the river Notely, which is some two miles distant. The testimony adduced in proof of this theory is, that a certain log was once marked on the Notely, which log was subsequently found floating in the pool of the Deep Hole in the Owassa.

LETTER IX.

Franklin, North Carolina, May, 1848.

The distance from Murphy to this place is reported to be fifty miles. For twenty miles the road runs in full view of Valley river, which is worthy in every particular of the stream into which it empties, the Owassa. It is a remarkbly cold and translucent stream, and looks as if it ought to contain trout, but I am certain that it does not. On inquiring of a homespun angler what fish the river did produce, he replied: "Salmon, black trout, red horse, hog-fish, suckers and cat-fish." I took the liberty of doubting the gentleman's word, and subsequently found out that the people of this section of country call the legitimate *pickerel* the "salmon," the *black bass* the "black trout," the *mullet* the "red horse," and *a deformed sucker* the "hog-fish." And now, while I think of it, I would intimate to my friends residing on the Ohio (to which glorious river all the streams of this region pay tribute) that *their* salmon is none other than the genuine pickerel of the North and South, their white perch only the sheep's head of the great lakes, and their black perch is but another name for the black or Oswego bass. So much for a piscatorial correction.

The only *picture* which attracted my particular attention in passing up the fertile but generally neglected bottom lands of Valley river, was a farm of twenty-five hundred

acres, one thousand acres being as level as a floor and highly cultivated. The soil seemed exceedingly rich, and it was evident yielded a considerable income to its possessor. I heard, in fact, that the proprietor had been offered twenty-five thousand dollars for this farm. And in what kind of a *house* does my reader imagine this wealthy man resided? In a miserable log hovel, a decayed and windowless one, which a respectable member of the *swine* family would hardly deign to occupy. Instances something like to this had already come to my knowledge, and caused me to wonder at the inconsistency and apparent want of common sense manifested by some of the farmers of this country, but this instance capped the climax. But again, the individual alluded to is a *white man,* and prides himself upon being more intelligent and acute than his neighbors; and yet one of his neighbors is an *Indian woman,* who raises *only* about *five thousand* bushels of potatoes per annum, but occupies a comfortable dwelling and lives like a rational being.

After leaving the above valley, my course lay over two distinct spurs of the Alleghanies, which are divided by the river Nan-ti-ha-lah, and consequently called the Nan-ti-ha-lah Mountains. In ascending the western ridge, I noticed that at the foot and midway up the pass the trees were all arrayed in their summer verdure, and among the forest trees were many chestnut and poplar specimens, which were at least seven or eight feet in diameter; while the more elevated portions of the ridge were covered with scrub and white oak, which were entirely destitute of foliage and not even in the budding condition. No regular cliffs frowned upon me as I passed along, but the mountains on either side were almost perpendicular, and in one or two places were at least twenty-five hundred feet high. In the side of the

highest of these mountains, I was informed, is a deep fissure or cave, which extends to the summit of the hill, where the outlet is quite small. When the wind is blowing from the northwest it passes entirely through this long and mysterious cavern, and when issuing from the top comes with such force as to *throw out* all the smaller stones which one may happen to drop therein. In descending this spur, the road passes directly along the margin of the most gloomy thicket imaginable. It is about a mile wide and somewhat over three miles in length. It is rank with vegetation, and the principal trees are laurel and hemlock. Even at noonday it is impossible to look into it more than a half a dozen yards, and then you but peer into the opening of leafy caves and grottoes which are perpetually cool and very desolate. It is said to abound in the more ferocious of wild animals, and no white man is yet known to have mustered courage enough to explore the jungle. During the existence of the Cherokee difficulties, the Indians were in the habit of encamping on many places on its margin for the purpose of easily eluding their pursuers ; and it is reported of one Indian hunter, who once entered the thicket, that he never returned, having, as is supposed, been overpowered by some wild beast. It was upon the margin of this horrible place, too, that the following incident occurred. An Indian woman once happened to be travelling down the mountain, unaccompanied by her husband, but with three young children, two little girls and a papoose. In an unexpected moment an enraged panther crossed their trail, and while it fell upon and destroyed the mother and one child, the elder girl ran for her life, carrying the infant on her back. The little heroine had not gone over a half a mile with her burden before the panther caught up with her, and drag-

ged the infant from her grasp; and while the savage creature was destroying this third victim, the little girl made her escape to a neighboring encampment.

The river Nan-ti-ha-lah, or the *Woman's Bosom*, was so named on account of its undulating and narrow valley, and its own intrinsic purity and loveliness. Upon this river is situated a rude but comfortable cabin, which is the only one the traveller meets with in going a distance of twenty miles. On first approaching this cabin, I noticed a couple of sweet little girls playing on the greensward before the door with a beautiful fawn, which was as tame as a lamb. This group, taken in connection with the wildness of the surrounding scene, gave me a most delightful feeling, the contrast was so strange and unexpected. The proprietor of the cabin owns about five thousand acres of land in this wilderness region, and is by profession a grazing farmer. He raises a goodly number of cattle as well as horses and mules, and his principal markets for them are Charleston and Savannah, to which cities he performs a pilgrimage in the autumn of every year. He is one of the "oldest inhabitants" of the region, and as I spent one night under his roof, I took occasion to draw from him a few anecdotes connected with his own experience. On questioning him with regard to the true character of the panther, he replied as follows: "I don't know *much* about this animal, but I have had one chance to study their nature which I can't forget. It was a very dark night, and I was belated on the western ridge, near the Big Laurel ravine. I was jogging along at a slow rate, when my horse made a terrible leap aside, and I saw directly in front of me one of the biggest of panthers. He soon uttered a shriek or scream (which sounded like a woman in distress) and got out of

the way, so that I could pass along. Every bone in my horse's body trembled with fear, and I can tell you that my own feelings were pretty squally. On my way was I still jogging, when the panther again made his appearance, just as he had before, and gave another of his infernal yells. I had no weapon with me, and I now thought I was a gone case. Again did the animal disappear, and again did I continue on my journey. I had not gone more than a hundred yards before I saw, on the upper side of the road, what looked like a couple of balls of fire, and just as I endeavored to urge my horse a little faster, another dreadful scream rang far down the valley. But, to make a long story short, this animal followed me until I got within a half a mile of my house, and, though he *ran around* me at least a dozen times, and uttered more than a dozen screams, he never touched me, and I got safely home. If you can gather any information from this adventure you are welcome to it; but all I know about the animal is this, that I hate him as I do the devil."

My host informed me that he was one of the men appointed by the Government to assess the property of the Cherokees at the time of their removal, and was subsequently employed to aid in their coerced removal. With a view of pacifying the Indians, it had been stipulated that the cabin and improvements of each Indian should be assessed, and an equivalent in money should be paid into his hands for said property; and a part of the nation, it will be remembered, including the head chief, were opposed to the treaty of banishment. In fulfilling his duties as a Government officer, my informant endured many hardships, subjected himself to much peril, and met with many touching as well as some ridiculous scenes. In the course of a

few months he visited, in connection with his assistant and interpreter, every cabin in the counties of Cherokee and Macon; and, from the numerous adventures which he related to me, I will record two or three.

"At one time," said my friend, "we arrived at a cabin were we knew resided, 'solitary and alone,' an old bachelor Indian. It was night, and very cold and stormy. As we were tying our horses the Indian heard us, and, knowing our business, immediately arose and fastened his door that we should not get in. We remonstrated from without, and told him we were almost frozen, and he must admit us, but never a word would he answer; and this was repeated several times. We finally got mad and knocked down the door and entered. The Indian was lying upon a bench before the fire, and by his side were four dogs. We asked him a number of questions, but still did he keep silent. We had by this time made up our minds to 'take care of number one,' and proceeded to cook our bacon. In doing this we had great difficulty on account of the dogs, which were almost starved to death, and were constantly grabbing up our victuals from the coals. They were the ugliest animals that I ever saw, and did not care a pin for the heavy licks that we gave them. And the only way we could get along was for the interpreter to cook the meat, while my assistant and myself seated ourselves at the two corners of the hearth, and as the dogs jumped over the body of the Indian, (who was yet lying on his bench,) we would grab them by the neck and tail and pitch them across the room. So this interesting business continued until the meat was cooked. I then took a slice, put it on a piece of bread, and giving it to the Indian, said to him: 'Now don't be a fool, take this meat and be good friends,

for we don't want to injure you.' Whereupon he got over his resentment, took the meat, and began talking so that we could not stop him."

But another incident related to me was truly affecting, and occurred at the time of removal. "There was an old Indian," continued my host, "named *Euchellah*, who had thrown out the idea that he was a strong man, and never would submit to leave his cabin willingly: those who wanted him to go must take him by force. It was in the forenoon, and a whole posse of officers entered his cabin, and after a pretty severe scuffle we succeeded in fastening the old fellow's arms and hands with a rope. He now saw that he must go, and told his wife to get ready, and she got ready *by going out to feed her pig and the chickens*, just as if she was coming back in a few hours. We then started with our prisoners, and just as we were crossing a hill which overlooked the Indian's cabin, he suddenly wheeled about, and as his eyes fell upon his little garden and his hut, he burst into tears, and I thought the man's heart would break. And now when people tell me that the Indian never weeps, I tell them it's no such thing; but, it was true, *Euchellah* had some reason to feel bad; for he had four children buried near his cabin, and had lived there for fifty years. We continued on our way to the West, but in two days our Indian made his escape with his wife. We hunted for them among the mountains, and though we recaptured Euchellah, we never could find his wife, and afterwards heard that she starved to death on a distant mountain. The Indian was now guarded by four soldiers; but, while crossing a certain gap, he suddenly rose upon his keepers and killed three of them, while the other officer, as well as himself, escaped. The Indian was again taken pris-

oner, tried by court martial, and sentenced *to be executed.* When told that he was to be shot down by a rifle ball, he manifested no fear, and, up to the moment that he was shot down, not a tear made its appearance in his eye. He could weep on leaving his home, but he would not weep when he came to die. And the old man was buried on the road side, half way between this place and Murphy."

"But another removal incident that I remember," continued my landlord, "was to this effect. It was another old Indian who had a large family and was religious. When we called to take him, he said he only wanted to ask one favor, which was, that we would let him *have one more prayer with his wife and children in his old cabin.* We of course granted the request, and when he was through, out came the old fellow and said that he was ready. But just as we were leaving the little clearing, the Indian called his wife and children to his side, and talked to them in the most poetical and affecting manner about their meager but much-loved possession, which they were about to leave for ever. He then took the lead of our procession, and without uttering a word, marched onward with a firm step. We never heard this man's voice again until we had passed beyond the Mississippi."

The scenery lying between the Nan-ti-ha-lah and this place is of the wildest character. From the summit of the pass and along the road as you descend to the eastward, a number of very imposing scenes present themselves, but chief among all the hills rises the rugged peak of *Bald Mountain.* The prospect from this point is similar to that which I have described from Trail Mountain, but the legend which commemorates the place is quite interesting, and accounts for the baldness of the mountain's top, which was

formerly covered with a dense forest. The Cherokees relate that there once existed among those mountains a very large bird, which resembled in appearance the green-winged hornet, and this creature was in the habit of carrying off the younger children of the nation who happened to wander into the woods. Very many children had mysteriously disappeared in this manner, and the entire people declared a warfare against the monster. A variety of means were employed for his destruction, but without success. In process of time it was determined that the wise men (or medicine men) of the nation should try their skill in the business. They met in council and agreed that each one should station himself on the summit of a mountain, and that, when the creature was discovered, the man who made the discovery should utter a loud halloo, which shout should be taken up by his neighbor on the next mountain, and so continued to the end of the line, that all the men might have a shot at the strange bird. This experiment was tried and resulted in finding out the hiding-place of the monster, which was a deep cavern on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge and at the fountain-head of the river Too-ge-lah. On arriving at this place, they found the entrance to the cavern entirely inaccessible by mortal feet, and they therefore prayed to the Great Spirit that he would bring out the bird from his den, and place him within reach of their arms. Their petition was granted, for a terrible thunder-storm immediately arose, and a stroke of lightning tore away one half of a large mountain, and the Indians were successful in slaying their enemy. The Great Spirit was pleased with the courage manifested by the Cherokees during this dangerous fight, and, with a view of rewarding the same, he willed it that all the highest mountains in their land should thereaf-

ter be destitute of trees, so that they might always have an opportunity of watching the movements of their enemies.

As a sequel to this legend, it may be appropriately mentioned, that at the head of the Too-ge-lah is to be found one of the most remarkable curiosities in this mountain-land. It is a granite cliff, with a smooth surface or front, half a mile long, and twelve hundred feet high, and generally spoken of in this part of the country as the *White-side Mountain*, or *the Devil's Court-house*. To think of it is almost enough to make one dizzy, but to see it fills one with awe. Near the top of one part of this cliff is a small cave, which can be reached only by passing over a strip of rock about two feet wide. One man only has ever been known to enter it, and when he performed the deed he met at the entrance of the cave a large bear, which animal, in making its escape, slipped off the rock, fell a distance of near a thousand feet, and was of course killed. When the man saw this, he became so much excited that it was some hours before he could quiet his nerves sufficiently to retrace his dangerous pathway.

LETTER X.

Franklin, North Carolina, May, 1848.

The little village of Franklin is romantically situated on the Little Tennessee. It is surrounded with mountains, and as quiet and pretty a hamlet as I have yet seen among the Alleghanies. On the morning after entering this place, I went to the post office, for the purpose of obtaining a peep at the last number of the National Intelligencer, whereupon the officiating gentleman informed me that I should find it at the office of a young lawyer whom he named. I called upon the legal gentleman, and found him, like all the intelligent people of the country, very polite and well informed. In speaking of the surrounding pictorial associations he alluded to a certain waterfall, and added that the gentleman who referred me to him owned a plantation near the falls, on a famous trout-stream, and was an *angler*. On this hint I sent a couple of handsome flies, as a present, to my post-office friend, and in less than twenty minutes thereafter he made his appearance at my lodgings, and insisted that we should go upon a fishing excursion, and that the lawyer should accompany us. Horses were immediately procured, and having rode a distance of ten miles along a very beautiful stream called *Kul-la-sa-jah*, or *the Sugar Water*, we came to the chasm leading to the falls. Here we tied our horses, and while my companions commenced

throwing the fly, I proceeded to the more profitable employment of taking sketches.

The chasm of the Sugar Water Falls is about half a mile long, and immediately below the precipices are perpendicular and very imposing, reaching an elevation of at least one thousand feet. The falls themselves are three in number—the first and principal one being about sixty feet high. Emptying into the Sweet Water, directly at the lower end of the chasm, is a tiny brook without a name, upon which I found a cascade of great beauty. The water falls near forty feet, but sings its eternal song in a shadowy recess, where hoary trees, mossy rocks, and exquisite vines, of every variety peculiar to the country, remain in their original wildness. As I clambered up the ravine leading to this cascade, I startled a doe from the green couch where she had been spending the noontide hours. I added a number of sketches to my portfolio, and after spending "alone in my glory" the whole afternoon, wandering from one chasm to another, I left the delightful valley with reluctance, musing upon the marvellous beauty of every thing in the world formed by the hand of God.

On arriving at the spot where our horses were tied, I found my companions both wearing uncommonly long faces, for they had not succeeded in killing a single trout. I joked my post-office friend about his "famous trout-stream," and then, remounting our horses, we paid a visit to his plantation, where we enjoyed a comfortable supper, and continued on our way home by the light of the moon. Under any circumstances this would have been an agreeable ride, but on the present occasion my companions did all the talking, and the substance of two of their stories I herewith subjoin merely as specimens:

"I can't account for our bad luck in catching trout to-day," said my post-office friend; "but I do assure you that a couple of young men named Hyatt, and myself, once went a fishing in the Sweet Water, and we took one hundred and seventy-five trout. But this is not to the purpose. On that occasion we fished up the stream; and when we came to the mouth of the chasm, we saw a big buck, which we frightened towards the falls as we ascended. When we came near the falls, one of the Hyatts and myself stopped fishing, and went to work to corner the buck, and see if we could kill him with stones, or cause him to drown himself. There was no way for him to make his escape, except by running directly over us, and this we did not suppose he would dare attempt. He made many desperate efforts to get away, and at one time managed to climb an almost perpendicular wall of rock to the height of some twenty feet, when he lost his foothold and fell into the pool below. He now became very much enraged, but we continued to pelt him with stones, though without effecting any serious injury. After bothering him for at least half an hour, the creature finally got upon the rocks at the lower part of the pool, when he swept by us with great fury, and started down the chasm, making some of the most fearful leaps that I ever saw. And now it so happened that we saw the younger Hyatt standing upon a rock and casting his fly upon a pool, where we thought the deer must pass in his downward course, and we immediately shouted to the angler to 'look out.' He did so, and immediately drew out a hunting-knife which he had in his pocket, and as the deer tumbled into the pool, young Hyatt actually *jumped upon his back, and succeeded in giving him a fatal stab,* so that the animal merely crawled upon the rocks to die. It was

quite late in the evening before we started for home, and we only brought the skin along with us; but as we left the chasm, we saw a large panther descending one of the cliffs of the gorge, as if hastening to have a feast upon the dead deer."

The "story" of my lawyer friend, or rather a fragment of his entertaining conversation was as follows: "As it is important, Mr. Lanman, that you should not leave our country without learning something of our great personages, and as our companion here is a modest man, I will give you a brief sketch of his character. He is a gentleman of some property, for he not only owns the plantation where we took supper, but one or two others of equal value. He is one of the oldest residents in this mountain region—a gentleman of fine moral character, and with a heart as guileless as that of a child. He is a passionate lover of scenery, and has probably explored the beauties of this mountain land more thoroughly than any other man now living; he is also a great lover of botany, geology, insectology, and a dozen other ologies, and I believe has made a number of discoveries in all his favorite studies. As you have heard, he tells a capital story, and, as you may see by looking into some of our southern newspapers, he uses the pen with ease and a degree of elegance. He cherishes a love for the 'angle art,' and I must say usually succeeds in his fishing exploits much better than he has to-day. By profession he is a knight of the needle; but, being somewhat advanced in years, he amuses himself by fulfilling the duties of deputy postmaster in the village of Franklin."

The lawyer was here interrupted by the *hero* of his story, who *insisted* upon his changing the "subject theme,"

and the consequence is, my readers will be disappointed in obtaining any more information respecting the scientific deputy postmaster of the Alleghany mountains.

But, leaving the intellectual out of view, the most interesting character whom I have seen about Franklin is an old Cherokee Indian. His name is *Sa-taw-ha*, or *Hog-Bite*, and he is upwards of one hundred years of age. He lives in a small log hut among the mountains, the door of which is so very low that you have to crawl into it upon your hands and knees. At the time the greater part of his nation were removed to the Far West, the "officers of *justice*" called to obtain his company. He saw them as they approached, and, taking his loaded rifle in hand, he warned them not to attempt to lay their hands upon him, for he would certainly kill them. He was found to be so resolute and so very old, that it was finally concluded by those in power that the old man should be left alone. He lives the life of a hermit, and is chiefly supported by the charity of one or two Indian neighbors, though it is said he even now occasionally manages to kill a deer or turkey. His history is entirely unknown, and he says he can remember the time when the Cherokee nation lived upon the shores of a great ocean, (the Atlantic,) and the color of a white man's face was unknown.

In the immediate vicinity of this place may be seen another of those mysterious Indian mounds which we find beautifying nearly all the valleys of this land. And here it may not be out of place for me to introduce the opinions concerning their origin which prevail among the Indian tribes of the South. By some they are said to have been built by a race of people who have become extinct, and were formerly used by the Cherokees merely as convenient

places to have their dances and their games. A superstition also prevails, that in the ancient days every Indian brought to a certain place a small bark full of the soil which he cultivated, as a tribute to the Great Spirit, who in return sent them a plenteous harvest. Some allege that they were the burial places of great warriors and hunters; some that they were erected as trophies of remarkable victories; others that they were built as fortresses; and others still that upon them were performed the more sacred of religious rites. There is also a tradition existing among the Cherokees that these mounds formerly contained a species of sacred fire; and it is well known that an Indian has never been known to deface one of them, and to see them defaced by the white man always seems to make them unhappy. The only light (in the way of opinion) that I can throw upon these mounds is, that they owe their origin to some aboriginal custom similar to that which has brought together the huge piles of stones which the traveller meets with in various portions of the southern country. But all this information is traditionary, the builders of these mounds are unknown, and all that even the wise of the present generation can do is to look upon them in silence and wonder.

The gentleman upon whose property the above mentioned mound is situated is the nabob of the place, an intelligent man, and an old resident. I am now his guest, and he lives in comfortable style, his dwelling being surrounded with a score or two of out-houses. He carries on an extensive farming business, and is the owner of a goodly number of tidy, respectful, and industrious slaves. Though situated almost within rifle-shot of an impassable mountain, his residence is associated with clover-fields, a well-managed garden filled with flowers and vines, ancient trees

where sing the katydids in the evening hours, and above which swoop the joyous and noisy martin and the beautiful dove; and also with meadow-fields, where horses and cattle graze during the long summer day. But there is one association connected with this farm-house which is still ringing in my ears: I allude to a perpetual chorus of an everlasting quantity of jackasses, peacocks, and guinea-hens. My host seems to have a passion for these apparently accidental or unfinished specimens of natural history; and I must say that I have never before been privileged to enjoy such unearthly music as I have on his plantation. The painful braying of a jackass awakens his household from their slumbers, and the same braying, accompanied by the screams of the peacock and guinea-hen, continues without ceasing until the twilight hour, when the whippoorwill takes up her evening lay, and the world lapses into its nightly repose.

Having spent a Sabbath in Franklin, I obtained a little information with regard to the religious condition of the people in this section of country. The only denominations who have preaching here are the Methodists and Baptists. Among the latter class, the Bible custom of *washing feet* is still kept up with rigor. The preachers of both denominations are itinerants, and, so far as I have seen, are worthy, upright, and sensible men. They seem to think more of preaching the *doctrines of Christ* than proclaiming their own learning or advocating their own opinions, and it is therefore always a pleasure to hear them; they know their duties, and faithfully fulfil them, and I believe accomplish much good. The people attend the Sunday meetings from a distance of ten and fifteen miles; and, as the men and women all ride on horseback, and as they often come in

parties, their appearance on approaching the church is often exceedingly picturesque.

On the day of my arrival in this village, a negro teamster met with an accident while passing over a neighboring mountain, which resulted in his losing one of his four horses, which happened to step over a log, and, on being cut loose, fell down a precipice of forty feet into a pool of water. On being questioned as to the manner in which the animal fell, the negro briefly but *tell*ingly replied, "*Ka wallup, ka wallup, ka wallup, ka swash!*" I thought this a most forcible description, and could not but admire the man's ingenuity in representing each somerset by a single word.

Within a few days past I have become acquainted with two insects which I have never seen described, but which are found in abundance throughout the South. I allude to the dirt-dauber and the stump-stinger. In their general appearance they both resemble the wasp. The first lives in a cell, which it builds on the inner side of a shed or piazza. It is a noted enemy of the spider, and possesses the art and the habit of killing that insect in great numbers. But what is really remarkable, they have a fashion of stowing away the carcasses of their slaughtered enemies in their dwellings, as if for future use; and after the cell is full, they close it with mud, and proceed to build another cell, so that the opulence of one of them may be calculated by the number of his closed dwellings. The stump-stinger is remarkable for having attached to the middle of his body a hard and pointed weapon, with which he can dig a hole one inch in depth in the body of even a hickory tree. This weapon he usually carries under his tail, but when about to be used makes him resemble a gimlet in form. The instrument is very hard, and composed of two pieces, which he works up

and down, like a pair of chisels. It is supposed that he makes this hole for the purpose of depositing an egg, and it is alleged that the tree upon which he once fastens himself always falls to decay.

But this allusion to insects reminds me of an incident connected with the ant which I lately noticed in one of my mountain rambles. While watching an ant-hill, I discovered that the little creatures were busily engaged in enlarging the hole of their miniature cavern. While watching their movements with intense interest, my eyes chanced to fall upon another detachment of the same insect, who were approaching the hole in question with the dead body of a grasshopper. The moment this party was discovered by those at the hole, the whole multitude fell to work and tumbled their dead booty along at a more rapid rate than before. On reaching the hole an attempt was made to drag the grasshopper into it, but without success, for it was too small. A movement to enlarge the hole was then immediately made, and in a very few moments the slain creature was out of my sight, and I could almost fancy that I saw the ants clapping their tiny hands and congratulating themselves upon the feat they had accomplished. Upon the whole it was one of the most interesting little incidents that I ever witnessed, and I left the spot feeling that I understood the words of Scripture which say, "Go to the ant, thou sluggard, and be wise!"

And now, as the *desultory* character of this letter will probably fully satisfy my readers, I will bring it to a close, promising to be somewhat more circumspect in the future.

LETTER XI.

Qualla Town, North Carolina, May, 1848.

In coming from Franklin to this place, a distance of thirty miles, I travelled over a wild, mountainous, and thinly settled country, where I was pained to witness the evil effects of intemperance, and made happy by following the windings of a beautiful river. Having been overtaken by a thunder-storm, I found shelter in a rude and comfortless cabin, which was occupied by a man and his wife and eight children. Every member of the family was barefooted, and one or two of the children almost destitute of clothing; not one of the children, though one or two of them were full-grown girls, could read a single word; the mother was sickly and haggard in her appearance, and one of the little boys told me that he had not eaten a hearty meal for ten days. I subsequently learned that the head of this household was a miserable drunkard.

The river to which I alluded is the Tuck-a-se-ja, which empties into the Tennessee. It is a very rapid stream, and washes the base of many mountains, which are as wild as they were a century ago. Whenever there occurs any interval land, the soil is very rich, and such spots are usually occupied. The mountains are all covered with forest, where wild game is found in abundance. The fact is, the people of this whole region devote more of their time to hunting

than they do to agriculture, which fact accounts for their proverbial poverty. You can hardly pass a single cabin without being howled at by half a dozen hounds, and I have now become so well educated in guessing the wealth of a mountaineer, that I can fix his condition by ascertaining the number of his dogs. A rich man seldom has more than one dog, while a very poor man will keep from ten to a dozen. And this remark with regard to dogs, strange as it may seem, is equally applicable to the *children* of the mountaineers. The poorest man, without any exception, whom I have seen in this region, lives in a log cabin with two rooms, and is the father of *nineteen children,* and the keeper of *six hounds.*

On my arrival in this place, which is the home of a large number of Cherokee Indians, (of whom I shall have much to say in future letters,) I became the guest of Mr. William H. Thomas, who is the "guide, counsellor, and friend" of the Indians, as well as their business agent. While conversing with this gentleman, he excited my curiosity with regard to a certain mountain in his vicinity, and, having settled it in his own mind that I should spend a week or two with him and his Indians, proposed (first excusing himself on account of a business engagement) that I should visit the mountain in company with a gentleman in his employ as surveyor. The proposed arrangement was carried out, and thus was it that I visited *Smoky Mountain.*

This mountain is the loftiest of a large brotherhood which lie crowded together upon the dividing line between North Carolina and Tennessee. Its height cannot be less than five thousand feet above the level of the sea, for the road leading from its base to its summit is seven and a half miles long. The general character of the mountain is sim-

ilar to that already given of other Southern mountains, and all that I can say of its panorama is, that I can conceive of nothing more grand and imposing. It gives birth to a pair of glorious streams, the *Pigeon river* of Tennessee, and the *Ocono lufty* of North Carolina, and derives its name from the circumstance that its summit is always enveloped, on account of its height, in a blue or smoky atmosphere.

But the chief attraction of Smoky Mountain is a singular cliff known throughout this region as the *Alum Cave.* In reaching this spot, which is on the Tennessee side, you have to leave your horses on the top of the mountain, and perform a pedestrian pilgrimage of about six miles up and down, very far up and ever so far down, and over every thing in the way of rocks and ruined vegetation which Nature could possibly devise, until you come to a mountain side, which is only two miles from your starting place at the peak. Roaring along at the base of the mountain-side alluded to is a small stream, from the margin of which you have to climb a precipice, in a zigzag way, which is at least two thousand feet high, when you find yourself on a level spot of pulverized stone, with a rocky roof extending over your head a distance of fifty or sixty feet. The length of this hollow in the mountain, or "cave," as it is called, is near four hundred feet, and from the brow of the butting precipice to the level below the distance is perhaps one hundred and fifty feet. The top of the cliff is covered with a variety of rare and curious plants, and directly over its centre trickles a little stream of water, which forms a tiny pool, like a fountain in front of a spacious piazza. The principal ingredients of the rock composing this whitish cliff are alum, epsom salts, saltpetre, magnesia, and copperas, and the water which oozes therefrom is distinguished

for its strong medicinal qualities. This strange and almost inaccessible, but unquestionably very valuable cave, belongs to a company of neighboring Carolinians, who have already made some money out of the alum, but have not yet accomplished much in the way of purifying and exporting the various products in which it abounds.

The scenery upon which this cave looks down, however, interested me quite as much as the cave itself. From the most comprehensive point of view two mountains descend abruptly into a kind of amphitheatre, where the one on the right terminates in a very narrow and ragged ridge, which is without a particle of vegetation, while far beyond, directly in front of the cave, rises a lofty and pointed mountain, backed by some three or four of inferior magnitude. The ridge which I have mentioned is itself very high, but yet the cave looks down upon it, and it is so fantastic in its appearance that from different points of view you may discover holes leading like windows entirely through it, while from other places you might fancy that you looked upon a ruined castle, a decayed battlement, or the shattered tower of an old cathedral. To gaze upon this prospect at the sunset hour, when the mountains were tinged with a rosy hue, and the immense hollow before me was filled with a purple atmosphere, and I could see the rocky ledge basking in the sunlight like a huge monster on the placid bosom of a lake, was to me one of the most remarkable and impressive scenes that I ever witnessed; and then remember, too, that I looked upon this wonderful prospect from a framework of solid rock, composed of the stooping cliff. It was a glorious picture, indeed, and would have amply repaid one for a pilgrimage from the remotest corner of the earth.

The ordinary time required to visit the Alum Cave is

two days; but, owing to bad weather, my friend and myself occupied the most of four days in performing the same trip. To give a minute account of all that we met with would occupy too much time, and I will therefore only record in this place the incidents which made the deepest impression on my own mind.

Our first night from home we spent in the cabin of a man who treated us with the utmost kindness, and would not receive a penny for his pains. So much for mountain hospitality. And now, to prove that our friend was an intelligent man, it may be mentioned that he is an adept in the following professions and trades, viz. those of medicine, the law, the blacksmith, the carpenter, the hunter, the shoemaker, the watchmaker, the farmer, and he also seemed to possess an inkling of some half dozen sciences. Now, I do not exactly mean to assert that the gentleman is a master practitioner in all these departments of human learning and industry; but if you were to judge of his ability by his use of technical words, you would not for a moment imagine he could have a competitor. But so it is in this wild region, one man has to perform the intellectual labor of a whole district: and, what is really a hard case, the knowledge which is thus brought to so good a market is nearly always the fruit of a chance education, and not of a systematic one.

Among those who spent the night with us under the roof of the above accomplished man, was one of the idle vagabonds of the country. This individual, it appears, had met with a singular accident on the day previous, and amused us by relating it. I regret that I cannot remember all the singular epithets that he employed, but I will do my best to report him faithfully:

"Now, the way the thing happened was this, and I reckon you never heard sich like afore. A lot of us fellers was out in 'Squire Jones's millpond a washing ourselves and swimming. Now, I allow this pond, in a common way, is nigh on to half a mile long; but at this time they were draining the pond, and it warnt so very large. Wall, there was one spot, well nigh the middle—no, not exactly; I reckon it was a little to the left—where the water poured out into a rale catarock. The fellers I was with got the devil in 'em, and offered to bet the tobaccer that I couldn't swim near the big hole in the dam without going through. I agreed, for I always counted myself a powerful swimmer. I made one try, and just touched the outside of the whirlpool. The fellers laughed at me and said I couldn't come it. I knew they said what was not so, and I got mad. I tried it again, and went a bit nearer, when they yelled out again and said it was no go. By this time I was considerable perplexed, but I swore to myself I would have the tobaccer, and I made one more try. But this time I got into the whirlpool, and couldn't get out; and, in less than no time, the water wheeled my head round to the hole, and in I went quick as a streak. I went through the hole, 'bout four or six feet long—no, I allow 'twas seven feet—and fell into the surge below, and, in five minutes or so—perhaps six—I was on dry land, sound as a button. The joke was on the fellers then, and when I told 'em to hand over my plunder, they said they would, and told me I looked like a big frog when I come out of the hole into the pool below the dam."

On the following morning we travelled to the foot of Smoky Mountain, and having obtained a guide, who happened to be one of the proprietors of Alum Cave, we re-

sumed our journey. In the immediate vicinity of the cave we came across an Indian camp, where were two Indians who were out bear-hunting. We were admitted under their bark roof, and with them spent the night, sleeping upon the ground. We remained a sufficient length of time to enjoy one supper and one breakfast; the first was composed of corn bread and bear meat, and the second of trout (caught in a neighboring stream) and a corn cake fried in the fat of a bear.

On questioning our Indian landlords, as we sat around our watch fire, with regard to the Alum Cave, I could only gather the fact that it was originally discovered by the famous chief Yo-na-gus-ka, who happened in his youth to track a bear to one of its corners, where he had a den. Disappointed on this score, I then turned to our guide to see what he could tell me about the cave that was not connected with its minerals, and the substance of his narrative was as follows:

I hav'n't much to say about the cave that I knows of, excepting one or two little circumstances about myself and another man. The first time I come here it was with my brother and two Indians. The sight of this strange gash in the mountain and the beautiful scenery all around made me very excited, and I was for climbing on top, and no mistake. The Indians and my brother started with me up the ledge at the north end of the cave, but when we got up about half way, just opposite to an eagle's nest, where the creatures were screaming at a fearful rate, they all three of 'em backed down, and said I must not keep on. I told 'em I was determined to see the top, and I would. I did get on top, and, after looking round a while and laughing at the fellows below, I began to think of going down again.

And then it was that I felt a good deal skeered. I found I couldn't get down the way I got up, so I turned about for a new place. It was now near sundown, and I hadn't yet found a place that suited me, and I was afraid I'd have to sleep out alone and without any fire. And the only way I ever got down was to find a pine tree that stood pretty close to a low part of the ledge, some three hundred yards from the cave, when I got into its top, and so came down among my friends, who said it was a wonder I hadn't been killed.

"I generally have had to pilot all strangers to the cave since that time, and I remember one circumstance that happened to a Tennessee lawyer, who caused us a good deal of fun; for there was a party of young gentlemen there at the time. We had a camp right under the cave, where it's always dry, and about midnight the lawyer I mentioned suddenly jumped up as we were all asleep, and began to yell in the most awful manner, as if something dreadful had happened. He jumped about as if in the greatest agony, and called on God to have mercy on him, for he knew he would die. O, he did carry on at a most awful rate, and we thought he must have been bitten by some snake or was crazy, so we tore off his clothes to see what was the matter; and what do you suppose we found? Nothing but a harmless little lizard, that had run up the poor man's legs, all the way up to his arm-pits, thinking, I suppose, that his clothes was the bark of a dead tree. After the trouble was all over, the way we laughed at the fellow was curious."

Our second day at the Alum Cave (and third one from home) was a remarkably cheerless one; for a regular snow-storm set in, mingled with hail, and, before we could reach

our horses and descend the Smoky Mountain, some three or four inches of snow had fallen. We spent that night under the roof of our good friend and worthy man, the guide, and it was with difficulty that we could induce him to receive a quarter eagle for all his trouble in piloting us and treating us to his best fare. On that night we ate our supper at nine o'clock, and what rendered it somewhat peculiar was the fact that his two eldest daughters, and very pretty girls besides, waited upon us at table, holding above our heads a couple of torches made of the fat pine. That was the first time that I was ever waited upon in so regal a style, and more than once during the feast did I long to retire in a corner of the smoky and dingy cabin to take a sketch of the romantic scene. At sunrise on the following morning my companion and myself remounted our horses, and in three hours were eating our breakfast in Qualla Town.

LETTER XII.

Qualla Town, North Carolina, May, 1848.

Qualla Town is a name applied to a tract of seventy-two thousand acres of land, in Haywood county, which is occupied by about eight hundred Cherokee Indians and one hundred Catawbas. Their district is mountainous from one extremity to the other, and watered by a number of beautiful streams, which abound in fish; the valleys and slopes are quite fertile, and the lower mountains are well adapted to grazing, and at the same time are heavily timbered and supplied with every variety of game. This portion of a much larger multitude of aborigines, in consideration of their rank and age, and of valuable services rendered to the United States, were permitted by the General Government to remain upon their native soil, while the great body of the Cherokee nation were driven into exile. They (the exiles) amounted in all to more than sixteen thousand souls, *eighteen hundred and fifty* having died on their way to the "*promised land*" beyond the Mississippi. And here it may with propriety be added, that since the removal those in the West have gradually decreased in numbers, while the remaining portion have steadily increased by births at the rate of four per cent. per annum. In addition to the Indians above mentioned, it ought to be stated that there is a remnant of two hundred still remaining in

the county of Cherokee; of those, however, I know but little, and therefore purpose to confine my remarks to those of Qualla Town alone.

The Indians of this district, having formed themselves into a regular company, with appropriate regulations, they elected an old friend of theirs, named William H. Thomas, (mentioned in my last letter,) to become their business chief, so that the connection now existing between the two parties is that of father and children. What the result of this arrangement has been will be fully understood when I come to speak of the advance which the Indians have made in the march of civilization. As they are organized at the present time, the Qualla Town people are divided into seven clans, and to each clan is assigned what is called a town, over each of which presides a regular chief. The Cherokee nation was originally divided into seven clans, which were probably descended from certain noted families, and the old party feeling is still preserved with jealous care among their descendants in this vicinity. The names of the clans are: In-e-chees-quah, or Bird Clan; In-egil-lohee, or Pretty-faced Clan; In-e-wo-tah, or Paint Clan; In-e-wah-he-yah, or Wolf Clan; In-e-se-ho-nih, or Blue Clan; In-e-co-wih, or Deer Clan; and In-e-eo-te-ca-wih, the meaning of which is not known. And among the customs which prevail among these clans is one which prevents their marrying among themselves, so that they have to select their wives from a neighboring fraternity. Formerly such marriages were prohibited by penalty of death.

With regard to the extent of their civilization and their existing manner of life, the following may be looked upon as a comprehensive summary: About three-fourths of the entire population can read in their own language, and,

though the majority of them understand English, a very few can speak the language. They practise, to a considerable extent, the science of agriculture, and have acquired such a knowledge of the mechanic arts as answers them for all ordinary purposes, for they manufacture their own clothing, their own ploughs, and other farming utensils, their own axes, and even their own guns. Their women are no longer treated as slaves, but as equals; the men labor in the fields, and their wives are devoted entirely to household employments. They keep the same domestic animals that are kept by their white neighbors, and cultivate all the common grains of the country. They are probably as temperate as any other class of people on the face of the earth, honest in their business intercourse, moral in their thoughts, words, and deeds, and distinguished for their faithfulness in performing the duties of religion. They are chiefly Methodists and Baptists, and have regularly ordained ministers, who preach to them on every Sabbath, and they have also abandoned many of their mere senseless superstitions. They have their own courts and try their criminals by a regular jury. Their judges and lawyers are chosen from among themselves. They keep in order the public roads leading through their settlement. By a law of the State they have the right to vote, but seldom exercise that right, as they do not like the idea of being identified with any of the political parties. Excepting on festive days, they dress after the manner of the white man, but far more picturesquely. They live in small log houses of their own construction, and have every thing they need or desire in the way of food. They are, in fact, the happiest community that I have yet met with in this Southern country, and no candid man can visit them without being

convinced of the wickedness and foolishness of that policy of the Government which has always acted upon the opinion that the red man could not be educated into a reasonable being.

By way of giving my readers a correct idea of the present condition of the Carolina Cherokees I will describe a visit that I paid to one of their churches on the Sabbath. I was anxious to see how far they were advanced in the ways of Christian instruction, and, though I noticed many little eccentricities, I was, upon the whole, very much pleased with what I saw and heard. I was accompanied by Mr. THOMAS, and we reached the rude but spacious log meeting-house about eleven o'clock. The first hour was devoted to instructing the children from a Cherokee Catechism, and the chiefs of the several clans were the officiating teachers. At twelve o'clock a congregation of some one hundred and fifty souls was collected, a large proportion of whom were women, who were as neatly dressed as could be desired, with tidy calico gowns, and fancy handkerchiefs tied over their heads. The deportment of all present was as circumspect and solemn as I have ever witnessed in any New England religious assembly. When a prayer was offered they all fell upon their knees, and in singing all but the concluding hymn they retained their seats. Their form of worship was according to the Methodist custom, but in their singing there was a wild and plaintive sweetness which was very impressive. The women and children as well as the men participated in this portion of the ceremony, and some of the female voices reminded me of the caroling of birds. They sung four hymns; three prayers were offered by several individuals, and two sermons or exhortations were delivered. The prayers were short and

pointed, and, as the shortest might be considered a fair specimen of the others, I will transcribe it for the edification of my readers:

"Almighty Lord, who art the father of the world, look down from heaven on this congregation. Bless the Indians, and supply them with all the food and clothing they may want; bless, also, the white men, and give them every thing they may need. Aid us all, O Lord, in all our good works. Take care of us through life, and receive us in heaven when the world shall be burnt up. We pray thee to take care of this young white man who has come to this Indian meeting. Protect him in all his travels, and go with him to his distant home, for we know by his kind words that he is a friend of the poor, ignorant, and persecuted Indian. Amen!"

The first preacher who addressed the meeting was a venerable man, *Big Charley*, and he took for his text the entire first chapter of John; but, before proceeding with his remarks, he turned to Mr. Thomas and wished to know if he should preach with the "*linguister*," or interpreter, for the benefit of the young stranger. I told him no; but requested Mr. Thomas to take notes, and, through his kindness, it is now my privilege to print the substance of that Cherokee sermon. It was as follows:

"In the beginning of creation, the world was covered with water. God spake the word and the dry land was made. He next made the day and the night; also, the sun, moon, and stars. He then made all the beasts and birds and fishes in the world, and was much pleased. He wanted some one to take care of all these creatures, and so he made man, and from his body a woman, to help him and be his companion. He put them into a beautiful garden,

which was filled with all kinds of good things to eat, but told them that there was one fruit they must not touch. That fruit was an apple, I believe. The woman was not grateful to God, and when a wicked serpent told her she might eat of the beautiful fruit which she was so curious to taste, she did eat of it, and gave some to the man, and he took some too. God talked with the man about his wicked conduct, and told him that he and his children should always have to work very hard for all they had to eat, so long as they lived in the world; and to the woman, God said, she must always suffer very much when she had children, and that the man should be her master. The man and woman were then turned out of the beautiful garden, and they were the father and mother of all the Indians in the world, as well as the white men and the black men. They had a great many children, and the world was very full of people. The people were very wicked, and God warned a good man that he intended to destroy the world by covering it all with water, and that this good man must build a large boat like a house, and get into it with his family, that they might not perish. The people laughed at this good man for believing such a story; but he took into his house two kinds of all the animals in the world, and the waters came; so the world was destroyed. After many days the good man sent out a dove to find some land, but it could not find any and came back. He sent it out again, and it never returned, and soon the great house rested on the top of a high mountain. Another race of people then covered the earth; and a great many good men lived upon the earth. One of the greatest of them it was who received from God the *ten commandments*, which direct all men how to be good and happy; but the world was yet very wicked.

Long after this, God sent into the world his only Son, whose name was Jesus Christ. This wonderful being it was who gave up his own life that all the wicked of the world might be saved, and the justice of God be satisfied; and so it is, that all the Indians, as well as the white men, who live like Jesus Christ, can get to heaven when they die."

In delivering his sermon the preacher occupied about thirty minutes; and the above facts were cemented together by a great number of flowery expressions, which made it quite poetical. His manner was impressive, but not particularly eloquent. After he had taken his seat, and a hymn had been sung, a young man stepped into the rude pulpit, who has distinguished himself by his eloquence. His name is Tekin-neb, or the Garden of Eden. He spoke from the same text, and his remarks bore chiefly on the redemption by Christ. At the conclusion of his address he gave a sketch of his own religious experience, and concluded by a remarkably affecting appeal to his hearers. His voice, emphasis, and manner were those of a genuine orator, and his thoughts were poetical to an uncommon degree. In dwelling upon the marvellous love of the Saviour, and the great wickedness of the world, he was affected to tears, and when he concluded there was hardly a dry eye in the house.

After the benediction had been pronounced, Mr. Thomas delivered a short address to the meeting on Temperance and a few secular matters, when the Indians quietly dispersed to their several homes. I retired to my own temporary home, deeply impressed by what I had seen and heard, for my pride had been humbled while listening to the rude savage, whose religious knowledge was evidently superior to my own.

LETTER XIII.

Qualla Town, North Carolina, May, 1848.

The plan adopted for the civilization of the Carolina Cherokees differs materially from any others adopted in the United States. Their amusements are not interfered with, excepting when found to have an immoral or unhappy tendency. A goodly number of their more ridiculous games, however, they have abandoned of their own accord, but the manly game of *ball-playing* is still practised after the ancient manner, with one or two restrictions. In the first place, they are not allowed to wager their property on the games, as of old, unless it be some trifle in the way of a woollen belt or cotton handkerchief, and they are prohibited from choking each other, and breaking their heads and legs, when excited, as was their habit in former times. Since my arrival here the Indians have had one of their ball games, and as it was gotten up especially for my edification, I made it a point of etiquette to be present at the preparatory dance and the game, as well as at the concluding ceremony, and these I will now endeavor to describe.

The preparatory or training dance took place on the night preceding the game, and none participated in it who were not to play on the following day. There were sixty young men present, besides the spectators, and they met on

a grassy plot formed by a bend of a neighboring stream called Soco Creek. The dancers were stripped of every particle of clothing but their waistbands; they made their own music, which was composed merely of a rapid succession of whoops and shouts; and they danced round a large blazing fire. The night in question was very beautiful, and when this strange group was looked upon by the light of the full moon, and the wild mountain scenery on every side, they presented a most romantic appearance indeed. They kept up the dance for over an hour, and, when it was concluded, all the men immediately ran towards a deep pool in the ice-cold stream, and without waiting for the perspiration to cool, plunged into the water, and, having finally emerged, started for their several homes. This dance, I am informed, had its origin in an ancient custom, which compelled all the candidates for a game of ball to inure themselves to every hardship for ten days before the game took place, and during all that time they were to eat but little food, and were to refrain from gratifying any of their sensual appetites.

On the morning of the game a large plain, lying between two hills and directly in front of the Indian Court-house, (a large circular lodge, built of logs,) was divested of every stone and stick on its surface, and at ten o'clock the spectators began to assemble. These were composed of the old men of the nation, a large number of boys, and a still larger number of women and children. They were all dressed in their holiday attire, so that feathers, shawl turbans, scarlet belts, and gaudy hunting shirts were quite abundant; and, scattered as they were in groups of from five to fifty on the hill sides and under the shadow of the trees, they presented a most picturesque appearance. Dur-

ing all this time the players had kept out of sight, and it was understood that the two parties were among the bushes, at the two ends of the plain, preparing themselves for the game. Under the direction of the presiding chief or game-director, two poles were now erected about six hundred yards apart, on either side of a given centre, and in this centre was placed the ball. From this point was the ball to be given to the players, and the party which first succeeded in throwing it outside of the pole belonging to their opponents to the number of twelve times were to be considered the winners.

Every thing being ready, a shrill whoop was given from one end of the plain, and immediately answered by the opposing party, when they all made their appearance, marching slowly to the centre, shouting and yelling as they passed along. Each party consisted of thirty splendidly formed young men, who were unincumbered by any clothing, save their common waistband,) and every individual carried in his hand a pair of ball sticks, made with a braided bag at one end. As the parties approached the centre, the lady-loves of the players ran out upon the plain and gave their favorite champions a variety of articles, such as belts and handkerchiefs, which they were willing to wager upon the valor of their future husbands. This little movement struck me as particularly interesting, and I was greatly pleased with the bashfulnesss and yet complete confidence with which the Indian maidens manifested their preferences.

When the several parties were assembled at the centre of the plain, each man selected his particular antagonist by placing his sticks at his rival's feet, after which the game-director delivered a long speech, wherein he warned them

to adhere to the existing regulations; and, throwing the ball high up in the air, made his escape to one side of the plain, and the game commenced. As it proceeded, the players became greatly excited, and I noticed that the ball was never taken in hand until after it had been picked up by the *spoony* stick, but the expertness with which these movements were performed was indeed surprising. At one time the whole crowd of players would rush together in the most desperate and fearful manner, presenting, as they struggled for the ball, the appearance of a dozen gladiators, striving to overcome a monster serpent; and then again, as one man would secure the ball and start for the boundary line of his opponent, the races which ensued were very beautiful and exciting. Wrestling conflicts also occurred quite frequently, and it often seemed as if the players would break every bone in their bodies as they threw each other in the air, or dragged each other over the ground; and many of the leaps, which single individuals performed, were really superb. The exercise was of a character that would kill the majority of white men. The game lasted for about two hours, and the moment it was finished the entire body of players, while yet panting with excessive fatigue, made a rush for the neighboring river, and in a short time appeared on the plain in their usual garb, and the old chief who had held the stakes awarded the prizes to the winning party. A short time afterwards the boys stripped themselves, and went through the same routine of playing as already described, when the ball-playing was at an end, and the people began to disperse with a view of getting ready for the evening dance.

I employed the intervening time by going home with

one of the chiefs, and eating a comfortable supper in his log cabin. The habitation of this chief was made of hewn logs, and occupied a farm of twenty acres on the mountain side, about one-fourth of which was in a state of cultivation, and planted with corn and potatoes. He had a tidy wife and several children, and his stock consisted of a pony, a cow, and some ten or a dozen sheep. At nine o'clock, I was again in the midst of a crowd of Indians, assembled at the court-house of the town. The edifice, so called, is built of hewn logs, very large and circular, without any floor but that of solid earth, and without any seats but one short bench intended for the great men of the nation. In the centre of this lodge was a large fire, and the number of persons who figured in the several dances of the evening, was perhaps two hundred, all fantastically dressed, and including men, women, and boys. Each dancer made his own music, and, with one exception, the dances were of the common Indian sort. The exception alluded to was particularly fantastic, and called "the Pilgrim Dance." They came in with packs on their backs, with their faces strangely painted, and with gourds hanging at their sides, and the idea seemed to be to represent their hospitality towards all strangers who visited them from distant lands. The dancing continued until midnight, when the presiding chief addressed the multitude on the subject of their duties as intelligent beings, and told them to return to their several homes and resume their labors in the field and in the shops. He concluded by remarking that he hoped I was pleased with what I had witnessed, and trusted that nothing had happened which would make the wise men of my country in the East think less of the poor Indian than they did at the present time: and he then added that, according to an

ancient custom, as I was a stranger they liked, the several chiefs had given me a name, by which I should hereafter be remembered among the Carolina Cherokees, and that name was *Ga-taw-hough No-que-sih,* or *The Wandering Star.*

LETTER XIV.

Qualla Town, North Carolina, May, 1848.

In the present letter I purpose to give you a brief historical account of certain celebrated Cherokee Indians, who are deservedly considered as among the bright particular stars of their nation. Some of them are dead, and some still living, but they were all born in this mountain land, and it is meet that I should award to each a "passing paragraph of praise."

The first individual that I would mention is Yo-na-gus-ka, or the *Drowning Bear*. He was the principal chief of the Qualla Indians, and died in the year 1838, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. When the Cherokees were invited to remove west of the Mississippi in 1809, he petitioned President Jefferson that he might be permitted to remain with his followers, among his native mountains, and his prayer was granted. He was eminently a peace chief, but obstinately declined every invitation of the Government to emigrate, and would probably have shed his blood and that of all his warriors in defending his rights. When about sixty years of age he had a severe fit of sickness, which terminated in a trance; this apparent suspension of all his faculties lasted about twenty-four hours, during which period he was supposed to be dead. It so happened, however, that he recovered, and on resuming his speech, told his at-

tendants that he had been to the spirit land, and held communion with his friends who had been long dead, that they were all very happy. He also stated that he had seen many white men, and that some of them appeared to be unhappy. The Great Spirit talked with him, and told him his time was not yet come to leave the world; that he had been a good and honest man, and that he must return to his people, and govern them with great care and affection, so that he might finally come and live with the Great Spirit for ever.

Subsequently to that time his people gave him a new name, which was Yon-na-yous-ta, or *How like an Indian.* He governed his people like a father, and was universally beloved. It was at his suggestion that Mr. Thomas was adopted into the Cherokee nation; the prominent reasons assigned for such a desire on his part being that Thomas had proved himself to be the Indian's friend, and was alone in the world, having no father or brother. Mr. Thomas exerted a great influence over him, and among the measures which the former recommended was the adoption of a temperance society for the improvement of himself and people, who were all addicted to the intoxicating bowl. He was a true patriot at heart, and on being reasoned into a correct state of mind, he expressed his determination to create a reform. He first reformed himself, and then summoned a council of all his people, ostensibly but secretly, for the purpose of establishing a temperance society. At this council he made a speech to the effect that they knew he had been an intemperate man, and had discouraged the use of strong drink, which he was confident was rapidly annihilating his nation; he expected to be with his people but a short time, and to extricate them from the great evil

he had mentioned was the real purpose of the Great Spirit in prolonging his life; he also spoke of the many evils to families and individuals resulting from intemperance; and when he concluded, it is said that his entire audience were in tears. Taking advantage of this triumph, he called his scribe, (for he himself was an illiterate man,) and requested him to write these words upon a sheet of paper: "The undersigned drink no more whiskey;" to which pledge he requested that his name should be attached. Every member of the council appended his name to the paper, and thus was established the first temperance society among the Cherokees, which has already accomplished wonders. Among the regulations which he afterwards proclaimed, was one that each Indian should pay a fine of two shillings for every offence committed in breaking the pledge, and that the money thus collected should be expended in extending the boundaries of their territory. And here it may be well to mention the fact, that though this "father of temperance" among the Indians had been extremely dissipated during a period of thirty years, he was never known, even in *the way of medicine*, to touch a drop of spirits after his first temperance speech.

The reputation of Yo-na-gus-ka as an orator was coextensive with his entire nation. He not only understood the art of working upon the feelings and clothing his thoughts in the most appropriate imagery, but the thoughts themselves were invariably sound, and his arguments unanswerable. From many examples of his reasoning I select one. When once invited by the officers of Government to remove westward, even after he and his people had become citizenized, he was informed that in the West he would have an abundance of the most fertile land, with

plenty of game; also a government of his own; that he would be undisturbed by the whites, and that the United States Government would ever protect him from future molestation. In replying to this invitation, as he stood in the midst of armed soldiers, he remarked in substance as follows: "I am an old man, and have counted the snows of almost eighty winters. My hair, which is now very white, was once like the raven's wing. I can remember when the white man had not seen the smoke of our cabins westward of the Blue Ridge, and I have watched the establishment of all his settlements, even to the Father of Waters. The march of the white is still towards the setting sun, and I know that he will never be satisfied until he reaches the shore of the great water. It is foolish in you to tell me that the whites will not trouble the poor Cherokee in the Western country. The white man's nature and the Indian's fate tell a different story. Sooner or later one Government must cover the whole continent, and the red people, if not scattered among the autumn leaves, will become a part of the American nation. As to the white man's promises of protection, they have been too often broken; they are like the reeds in yonder river—they are all lies. North Carolina had acknowledged our title to these lands, and the United States had guarantied that title; but all this did not prevent the Government from taking away our lands by force; and, not only that, but sold the very cow of the poor Indian and his gun, so as to compel him to leave his country. Is this what the white man calls justice and protection? No, we will not go to the West. We wanted to become the children of North Carolina, and she has received us as such, and passed a law for our protection, and we will continue to raise our corn

in this very land. The people of Carolina have always been very kind to us, and we know they will never oppress us. You say the land in the West is much better than it is here. That very fact is an argument on our side. The white man must have rich land to do his great business, but the Indian can be happy with poorer land. The white man must have a flat country for his plough to run easy, but we can get along even among the rocks on the mountains. We never shall do what you want us to do. I don't like you for your pretended kindness. I always advise my people to keep their backs for ever turned towards the setting sun, and never to leave the land of their fathers. I tell them they must live like good citizens; never forget the kindness of North Carolina, and always be ready to help her in time of war. I have nothing more to say."

When Yo-na-gus-ka was about to die, he summoned his chiefs and warriors by his bed-side, and talked to them at great length upon the importance of temperance, and in opposition to the idea of their emigrating to the West, and made them swear that they would never abandon the graves of their fathers, or his own grave, which is now marked by a pile of stones on the margin of the Soco. In personal appearance he was very handsome, and left two wives. He was the owner of considerable property, and among his possessions was an old negro named *Cudjo*. This man is now living, and on questioning him about his former master he replied: "If Yo-na-gus-ka had had larning, I b'lieve he'd been a very great man. He never allowed himself to be called *master*, for he said Cudjo was his brother, and not his slave. He was a great friend o' mine, and when he died, I felt as if I didn't care about living any longer myself; but Yo-na-gus-ka is gone, and poor old Cudjo is still alive and well."

The second character that I will introduce to my readers is now living in Qualla Town. His name is *Salola*, or the *Squirrel*. He is quite a young man, and has a remarkably thoughtful face. He is the blacksmith of his nation, and with some assistance supplies the whole of Qualla Town with all their axes and ploughs; but what is more, he has manufactured a number of very superior rifles and pistols, including stock, barrel, and lock; and he is also the builder of grist-mills, which grind all the corn which his people eat. A specimen of his workmanship, in the way of a rifle, may be seen at the Patent-Office, in Washington, where it was deposited by Mr. Thomas; and I believe Salola is the first Indian who ever manufactured an entire gun. But, when it is remembered that he never received a particle of education in any of the mechanic arts, but is entirely self-taught, his attainments must be considered truly remarkable.

That he labors under every disadvantage in his most worthy calling, may be shown by the fact that he uses a *flint-stone* for an anvil, and a *water-blast* for a bellows. In every particular he is a most worthy man, and though unable to speak the English tongue, is a very good scholar in his own language. He is the husband of a Catawba woman, whom he married *before he could speak one word of her own tongue, or she could speak Cherokee;* but they have now established a language of their own, by which they get along very well. Salola, upon the whole, is an honor to the country, and one whose services in some iron or steel establishment of the eastern cities would be of great value. Is there not some gentleman in Philadelphia or New-York who would take pleasure in patronizing this mechanical prodigy of the wilderness?

Another of the characters I intended to mention is named *Euchella.* He is a very worthy chief, and now in the afternoon of his days. He is quite celebrated among his people as a warrior, but is principally famous for important services rendered by him to the United States Government during the Cherokee troubles. He, and a band of one hundred followers, first attracted public attention by evading, for upwards of a whole year, the officers of Government who had been commanded to remove the party beyond the Mississippi. It having been ascertained, however, that Euchella could not easily be captured, and would never submit to leave his country, it was determined that an overture should be made, by which he and his brotherhood of warriors could be secured to assist the whites in their troublesome efforts to capture three Indians who had murdered a number of soldiers. The instrument employed to effect a reconciliation was the Indian trader, Mr. Thomas, who succeeded in appointing a meeting with Euchella on a remote mountain-top.

During this interview, Mr. Thomas remonstrated with Euchella, and told him that, if he would join the whites, he might remain in Carolina, and be at peace. "I cannot be at peace," replied the warrior, "because it is now a whole year that your soldiers have hunted me like a wild deer. I have suffered from the white man more than I can bear. I had a wife and a little child—a brave, bright-eyed boy—and because I would not become your slave, they were left to starve upon the mountains. Yes; and I buried them with my own hand, at midnight. For a whole week at a time have I been without bread myself, and this in my own country too. I cannot bear to think upon my wrongs, and I scorn your proposition." It so happened, however, that

he partially relented, and having submitted the proposition to his warriors, whom he summoned to his side by a whoop, they agreed to accept it, and from that time Euchella became an ally of the army. It was by the efforts of Euchella and his band that the *murderers* already mentioned were arrested and punished. They had been condemned by a court martial, and sentenced to be shot, and the scorn of death manifested by one of them, named Charley, is worth recording. He had been given into the hands of Euchella, and when he was tied to the tree, by one arm, where he was to die, (to which confinement he submitted without a murmur,) he asked permission to make a few remarks, which was of course granted, and he spoke as follows: "And is it by your hands, Euchella, that I am to die? We have been brothers together; but Euchella has promised to be the white man's friend, and he must do his duty, and poor Charley is to suffer because he loved his country. O, Euchella! if the Cherokee people now beyond the Mississippi carried my heart in their bosoms, they never would have left their beautiful native land—their own mountain land. I am not afraid to die; O, no, I want to die, for my heart is very heavy, heavier than lead. But, Euchella, there is one favor that I would ask at your hands. You know that I had a little boy, who was lost among the mountains. I want you to find that boy, if he is not dead, and tell him that the last words of his father were that he must *never* go beyond the Father of Waters, but die in the land of his birth. It is sweet to die in one's own country, and to be buried by the margin of one's native stream." After the bandage had been placed over his eyes, a little delay occurred in the order of execution, when Charley gently raised the bandage, and saw a dozen of Euchella's warriors

in the very act of firing; he then replaced the cloth, without manifesting the least anxiety or moving a muscle, and in a moment more the poor savage was weltering in his blood. And so did all three of the murderers perish.

Another name, famous in the unwritten annals of Cherokee history, is that of an Indian named *Guess*, who was the inventor of the Cherokee alphabet. This alphabet contains eighty-six characters, each one of which represents a distinct sound. It can be acquired, by an apt scholar, in the course of ten days, and is now the foundation of the Cherokee literature. Guess died at the West in the year 1842.

The individual who translated the New Testament was an educated Indian, named *Elias Boudinot*, who lost his life by the hand of an Indian assassin. At the time of his death he was engaged upon a translation of the Bible, and was cut down in the midst of his usefulness, in 1839, merely because he had the fearlessness and the honesty to disagree with a majority of the Arkansas Cherokees in regard to a certain treaty. *John Ridge*, also an educated Indian, and his father, Major *Ridge*, were brave and honorable men, who were the friends of Boudinot, and like him perished by the hands of assassins, at the same time and for the same cause. The elder *Ridge* acted a conspicuous part in the battle of the Horse-Shoe, in the Creek war; while the younger *Ridge* was mainly distinguished for his intelligence and the happy influence of his life and good works.

LETTER XV.

Ashville, North Carolina, May, 1848.

The distance from Qualla Town to this place is sixty miles. The first half of the route is exceedingly mountainous and almost entirely uncultivated, but the valley of Pigeon river, down which you have to travel for a considerable distance, is very fertile and well cultivated. A pastoral charm seems to rest upon the scenery, and in this particular forcibly reminded me of the upper valley of the Mohawk. I occupied the most of two days in performing this trip, and the only incident that I met with which was at all unique, was upon this wise. I had stopped at a farm-house to take my dinner. It so happened that my host was about to erect a new barn, and some twenty of his neighbors were assembled for the purpose of raising the framework to its proper position. An abundance of whiskey had already been imbibed by a few of this rustic company, and among these was one individual who had recently been grossly cheated in purchasing a horse from a Tennessee horse-dealer. He had given a mule and twenty dollars for the stranger's gelding, and, though the animal was quite respectable in appearance, it had turned out to be old, unsound, and almost without a redeeming quality. The individual in question was noted for making a fool of himself when intoxicated, and on this occasion he was determined to prove true to himself. At

this time his horse speculation seemed to weigh heavily upon his mind, and in his vehement remarks he took particular pains to curse the entire State of Tennessee, including President Polk. The poor man finally became so completely excited that he swore he would whip the first man he met on the road who happened to be from Tennessee; and so the matter rested. In about thirty minutes thereafter, as fortune would have it, a man made his appearance on the road, apparently from the West; and in jeering their noisy companion, the farmers remarked that "now he would have a chance to revenge himself." The excitement of the horse-bitten speculator was consequently greatly increased, and when the stranger reached the hill-top he was accosted as follows:

"May I ask you, sir, if you come from Tennessee?"

"I do. What will you have?" replied the stranger.

The Carolinian then related his trading story, which he concluded by carefully reiterating the determination he had made. The stranger laughed at the idea, and was about to resume his journey, when the reins of his horse were seized, and he found that it was indeed necessary for him to fight his way out of the queer scrape. All remonstrance on his part was in vain; but at the very moment the fight was to commence, another horseman rode up, who was also interrogated as to his native State. His presence had a tendency to suspend hostilities; but when it was ascertained that he was *only* a Kentuckian, the Carolinian insisted upon going on with his business. The feelings of the Kentuckian were now enlisted, and he declared his intention of regulating the fight; whereupon he made a large ring, and taking out of his pocket a couple of pistols, he told the combatants "to go ahead," and at the same time warned the bystand-

ers that he would shoot the first man that interfered. The conclusion of the whole matter was, that the intoxicated man received a cruel thrashing for his ridiculous conduct, and the two gentlemen from the West quietly resumed their several journeys.

On my way to this place, I stopped for a few hours at *Deaver's Sulphur Springs*, which are about four miles from the French Broad river, on the road to Clarksville, Georgia. This is one of the most popular watering-places in the South, not only on account of the medicinal qualities of the water, but on account of the surrounding scenery, which is remarkably interesting, and also for the additional reason that the style in which people are entertained is well worthy of even such places as Saratoga. The several buildings connected with the establishment usually accommodate about two hundred families during the summer months, and they are chiefly from the cities of Charleston and Savannah. The people of Eastern North Carolina do not seem to know that they have such a delightful retreat within their borders, which, to a man of genuine taste, is as far ahead of Saratoga as a mountain stream is ahead of a canal.

With regard to Ashville, I can only say that it is a very busy and pleasant village, filled with intelligent and hospitable inhabitants, and is the centre of a mountain land, where Nature has been extremely liberal and tasteful in piling up her mighty bulwarks for the admiration of man. Indeed, from the summit of a hill immediately in the vicinity of the village, I had a southwestern view which struck me as eminently superb. It was near the sunset hour, and the sky was flooded with a golden glow, which gave a living beauty to at least a hundred mountain peaks, from the centre of which loomed high towards the zenith

Mount Pisgah and the *Cold Mountain*, richly clothed in purple, which are from twenty to thirty miles distant, and not far from six thousand feet in height. The middle distance, though in reality composed of wood-crowned hills, presented the appearance of a level plain or valley, where columns of blue smoke were gracefully floating into the upper air, and whence came the occasional tinkle of a bell, as the cattle wended their way homeward, after roaming among the unfenced hills. Directly at my feet lay the little town of Ashville, like an oddly-shaped figure on a green carpet; and over the whole scene dwelt a spirit of repose, which seemed to quiet even the common throbbings of the heart.

My first expedition on arriving here was to a gorge in the Blue Ridge called the *Hickory Nut Gap*. How it came by that name I cannot imagine, since the forests in this particular region, so far as I could ascertain, are almost entirely destitute of the hickory tree. It is true that for a distance of four miles the gorge is watered by a brook called after the hickory nut, but I take it that this name is a borrowed one. The entire length of the gap is about nine miles, and the last five miles are watered by the Rocky Broad River. The upper part of this stream runs between the Blue Ridge proper and a spur of the Blue Ridge, and at the point where it forces a channel through the spur its bed is exceedingly rocky, and on either hand, until it reaches the middle country of the State, it is protected by a series of mountain bluffs. That portion of the gorge which might be called the gateway is at the eastern extremity. From any point of view this particular spot is remarkably imposing, the gap being not more than half a mile wide, though appearing to narrow down to a few hun-

dred yards. The highest bluff is on the south side, and, though rising to the height of full *twenty-five hundred feet*, it is nearly perpendicular, and midway up its front stands an isolated rock, looming against the sky, which is of a circular form, and resembles the principal turret of a stupendous castle. The entire mountain is composed of granite, and a large proportion of the bluff in question positively hangs over the abyss beneath, and is as smooth as it could possibly be made by the rains of uncounted centuries. Over one portion of this superb cliff, falling far down into some undiscovered and apparently unattainable pool, is a stream of water, which seems to be the offspring of the clouds; and in a neighboring brook near the base of this precipice are three shooting waterfalls, at the foot of which, formed out of the solid stone, are three holes, which are about ten feet in diameter and measure from forty to fifty feet in depth. But, leaving these remarkable features entirely out of the question, the mountain scenery in this vicinity is as beautiful and fantastic as any I have yet witnessed among the Alleghanies. At a farm-house near the gap, where I spent a night, I had the pleasure of meeting an English gentleman and tourist, and he informed me that, though he had crossed the Alps in a number of places, yet he had never seen any mountain scenery which he thought as beautiful as that of the Hickory Nut Gap. My best view of the gorge was from the eastward, and just as the sun, with a magnificent retinue of clouds, was sinking directly in the hollow of the hills, and as I gazed upon the prospect, it seemed to me, as was in reality the case, that I stood at the very threshold of an almost boundless wilderness of mountains.

Before visiting this remarkable passage through the

mountains, I endeavored to ascertain, from the Cherokees of Qualla Town, its original Indian name, but without succeeding. It was my good fortune, however, to obtain a romantic legend connected therewith. I heard it from the lips of a Chief who glories in the two names of *All Bones* and *Flying Squirrel,* and, though he occupied no less than two hours in telling the story, I will endeavor to give it to my readers in about five minutes.

There was a time when the Cherokees were without the famous *Tso-lungh,* or tobacco weed, with which they had previously been made acquainted by a wandering stranger from the far East. Having smoked it in their large stone pipes, they became impatient to obtain it in abundance. They ascertained that the country where it grew in the greatest quantities was situated on the big waters, and that the gateway to that country (a mighty gorge among the mountains) was perpetually guarded by an immense number of little people or spirits. A council of the bravest men in the nation was called, and, while they were discussing the dangers of visiting the unknown country, and bringing therefrom a large knapsack of the fragrant tobacco, a young man stepped boldly forward and said that he would undertake the task. The young warrior departed on his mission and never returned. The Cherokee nation were now in great tribulation, and another council was held to decide upon a new measure. At this council a celebrated magician rose and expressed his willingness to relieve his people of their difficulties, and informed them that he would visit the tobacco country and see what he could accomplish. He turned himself into a mole, and as such made his appearance eastward of the mountains; but, having been pursued by the guardian

spirits, he was compelled to return without any spoil. He next turned himself into a humming-bird, and thus succeeded, to a very limited extent, in obtaining what he needed. On returning to his country, he found a number of his friends at the point of death, on account of their intense desire for the fragrant weed; whereupon he placed some of it in a pipe, and, having blown the smoke into the nostrils of those who were sick, they all revived and were quite happy. The magician now took it into his head that he would revenge the loss of the young warrior, and at the same time become the sole posssessor of all the tobacco in the unknown land. He therefore turned himself into a whirlwind, and in passing through the Hickory Nut Gorge he stripped the mountains of their vegetation, and scattered huge rocks in every part of the narrow valley; whereupon the little people were all frightened away, and he was the only being in the country eastward of the mountains. In the bed of a stream he found the bones of the young warrior, and having brought them to life, and turned himself into a man again, the twain returned to their own country heavily laden with tobacco; and ever since that time it has been very abundant throughout the entire land.

LETTER XVI.

Ashville, North Carolina, May, 1848.

I have just returned from an excursion down the French Broad River to *Patton's Warm Springs*, and the neighboring curiosities, and I now purpose to describe the "wonders I have seen." The original Indian name of the French Broad was *Pse-li-co*, the meaning of which I have not been able to ascertain. Its English name was derived from a famous hunter named *French*. It is one of the principal tributaries of the Tennessee, about one hundred miles long, from one to two hundred yards wide, and, taking its rise in the Blue Ridge near the border of South Carolina, runs in a northwestern direction. Judging of the whole, by a section of fifty miles, lying westward of Ashville, it must be considered one of the most beautiful rivers in this beautiful land. In running the distance above mentioned it has a fall of nearly fifteen hundred feet, and its bed seems to be entirely composed of solid rock. In depth it varies from five to fifteen feet, and, generally speaking, is quite clear, abounding in a great variety of plebeian fish. Its shores are particularly wild and rocky, for the most part nearly perpendicular, varying from one to four hundred feet in height, and, though usually covered with vegetation, they present frequent cliffs of granite, freestone, and blue limestone, which actually droop over the rushing waters

and present a most imposing appearance. With regard to its botanical curiosities, it can safely be said that a more fruitful and interesting valley can nowhere be found in the Union. Here we have not only every variety of American forest trees, but bushes, plants, flowers, and vines in the greatest profusion, and of the most vigorous growth; many of the grape vines, which weigh down the mighty sycamore, seem to be long enough, and strong enough, to link together a hundred ships of war. When it is remembered, too, that the air is constantly heavy with the fragrance of flowers, and tremulous with the perpetual roar of the stream, it may be readily imagined that a ride down the French Broad is a unique pleasure. Back of the river on either side the country is hilly and somewhat cultivated, but its immediate valley contains nothing that smacks of civilization but a turnpike road, and an occasional tavern. This road runs directly along the water's edge nearly the entire distance, and, on account of the quantity of travel which passes over it, is kept in admirable repair. It is the principal thoroughfare between Tennessee and South Carolina, and an immense number of cattle, horses, and hogs are annually driven over it to the seaboard markets. Over this road also quite a large amount of merchandise is constantly transported for the merchants of the interior, so that mammoth wagons, with their eight and ten horses, and their half-civilized teamsters, are as plenty as blackberries, and afford a romantic variety to the stranger.

In riding down the French Broad, I overtook a gentleman on horseback, who accompanied me about twenty miles. Immediately after the first salutation was passed, and he had ascertained that I was from the eastward, he

questioned me with regard to *the latest news from China.* I was surprised at the question, and after telling him I had none to communicate, I could not refrain from asking him what was the secret of his interest in that remote Empire. He replied that he resided on the French Broad, and was a dealer in ginseng. I had heard of the article before, and knew that it was found in abundance throughout this mountain region. My friend described it as a beautiful plant, with one stem and some twenty leaves at the top, and growing to the height of eighteen inches. That portion of it, however, which is prepared for market is the root. The Chinese are the only people in the world who make any use of it whatever; but with them it has been an article of commerce from time immemorial. It is said to be associated in some way or other with an unexplained superstition. Formerly it was obtained exclusively from Tartary, and the Tartars were in the habit of saying that they could never find it, excepting by shooting a magic arrow, which invariably fell where the plant was abundant. It is not thought to possess any valuable medicinal quality, and only has the effect of strengthening the sensual appetite. It is used in the same manner that we use tobacco, and to the tongue it is an agreeable bitter. It has been an article of export from this country for half a century, and the most extensive American shippers reside in Philadelphia. It is sold for about sixty cents the pound, and my travelling companion told me that his sales amounted to about forty thousand dollars per annum. What an idea! that even the celestials are dependent upon the United States for one of their cherished luxuries, and that luxury a common unnoticed plant of the wilderness! Ours is, indeed, "a great country."

I come now to speak of the Warm Springs, which are thirty-six miles from Ashville, and within six of the Tennessee line. Of the Springs themselves there are some half dozen, but the largest is covered with a house, and divided into two equal apartments, either one of which is sufficiently large to allow of a swim. The temperature of the water is 105 degrees, and it is a singular fact that rainy weather has a tendency to increase the heat, but it never varies more than a couple of degrees. All the springs are directly on the southern margin of the French Broad; the water is clear as crystal, and so heavy that even a child may be thrown into it with little danger of being drowned. As a beverage the water is quite palatable, and it is said that some people can drink a number of quarts per day, and yet experience none but beneficial effects. The diseases which it is thought to cure are palsy, rheumatism, and cutaneous affections; but they are of no avail in curing pulmonic or dropsical affections. The Warm Springs are annually visited by a large number of fashionable and sickly people from all the Southern States, and the proprietor has comfortable accommodations for two hundred and fifty people. His principal building is of brick, and the ball-room is 230 feet long. Music, dancing, flirting, wine-drinking, riding, bathing, fishing, scenery-hunting, bowling, and reading, are all practised here to an unlimited extent; but, what is more exciting than all these pleasures put together, is the rare sport of deer-hunting; and hereby "hangs a tale" to which I must devote a separate paragraph.

My polite landlord had intimated his intention of affording me a little sport, and immediately after a twelve o'clock dinner, on a certain day, he stepped out upon his piazza and gave two or three blasts with a small horn, the result of

which was, that, in about fifteen minutes, a negro mounted on a handsome horse made his appearance, accompanied by some twenty yelping hounds. The horn was next handed to the negro, and he was requested to go to a certain spot on the mountains, about three miles off, and put the dogs out after a deer. Two hours having elapsed, the landlord, his son, and myself each took a rifle, and, after riding some three miles up the French Broad, we stationed ourselves at different points for the purpose of welcoming the deer, which was expected to take to the water on the opposite side. We had scarcely been ten minutes in our hiding places before the loud baying of the hounds was heard, as they were coming down one of the mountain ravines, and in another instant a very large buck (with his horns as yet only about a foot long) plunged into the rapid stream. Instead of crossing the water, however, he made his way directly down the river, now swimming and now leaping, with the entire pack of hounds directly in his foamy wake. It was evident that he considered himself hard pressed, and, though now approaching a very rocky fall in the stream, he gave himself to the current and went over, and it seemed as if he must inevitably perish. But another call was immediately made upon our sympathies, for we discovered the entire pack of hounds passing into the same hell of waters. We remained in suspense, however, but a few moments, for we saw the pursued and the pursuers all emerge from the foam entirely unharmed, and still struggling in the race. Now the deer took to an island, and then to another, and now again to the water, and away did the whole pack speed down the river. By this time the buck was evidently becoming tired, and certain of being overtaken; and, having reached a shallow place in the

river, he turned upon the dogs and stood at bay. His movements during this scene were indeed superb, and I could not but pity the noble fellow's condition. His sufferings, however, were of short duration, for, while thus standing in full front of his enemies, the landlord's son sent a ball through his heart from the shore, and with one frightful leap the monarch of the mountains was floating in a crimson pool. The mounted negro now made his appearance, as if by magic, and, having waded and swam his horse to the dead deer, took the creature in tow, brought him to the land, threw him upon his horse, and so ended the afternoon deer-hunt.

About six miles from the Warm Springs, and directly on the Tennessee line, are located a brotherhood of perpendicular cliffs, which are known as *the Painted Rocks.* They are of limestone, and rise from the margin of the French Broad to the height of two, three and four hundred feet. They are of a yellowish cast, owing to the drippings of a mineral water, and in form as irregular and fantastic as can well be imagined. They extend along the river nearly a mile, and at every step present new phases of beauty and grandeur. Taken separately, it requires but a trifling effort of the fancy to find among them towers, ramparts and moats, steeples and domes in great abundance; but when taken as a whole, and viewed from the opposite bank of the river, they present the appearance of a once magnificent city in ruins. Not only are they exceedingly beautiful in themselves, but the surrounding scenery is highly attractive, for the mountains seem to have huddled themselves together for the purpose of looking down upon and admiring the winding and rapid stream. With regard to historical and legendary associations, the Painted Rocks

are singularly barren; in this particular, however, they are like the entire valley of the French Broad, where relics of a by-gone people are few and far between. The rugged aspect of this country would seem to imply that it was never regularly inhabited by the Indians, but was their hunting ground; and what would appear to strengthen this idea is the fact that it is, even at the present day, particularly famous for its game.

On the day that I returned from my trip down the French Broad the weather was quite showery, and the consequence was, the rain was occasionally employed as an apology for stopping and enjoying a quiet conversation with the people on the road. At one of the places where I halted there was a contest going on between two Whigs concerning the talents of the honorable gentleman who represents the famous county of Buncombe in Congress. The men were both strongly attached to the representative, and the contest consisted in their efforts to excel each other in complimenting their friend, and the climax of the argument seemed to be that Mr. CLINGMAN was not "*some pumpkins*," but "PUMPKINS." The strangeness of this expression attracted my attention, and when an opportunity offered I questioned the *successful* disputant as to the origin and meaning of the phrase he had employed, and the substance of his reply I might give you if it was of a nature to interest the reader.

At another of the houses where I tarried for an hour, it was my fortune to arrive just in time to witness the conclusion of a domestic quarrel between a young husband and his wife. On subsequently inquiring into the history of this affectionate couple, I obtained the following particulars: The young man was reported to be a very weak-minded individual, and ever since his marriage had been

exceedingly jealous of his wife, who (as I had seen) was quite beautiful, but known to be perfectly true to her husband. Jealousy, however, was the rage of the man, and he was constantly making himself very ridiculous. His wife remonstrated, but at the same time appreciated his folly, and acted accordingly. On one occasion she was politely informed by her husband that he was very unhappy, and intended to hang himself. "Very well," replied the wife, "I hope you will have a good time." The husband was desperate, and having obtained a rope, and carefully adjusted a certain stool, he slipped the former over his head, and, when he knew that his wife was looking on, he swung himself to a cross-beam of his cabin. In playing his trick, however, he unfortunately kicked over the stool, (which he had placed in a convenient spot for future use in regaining his feet,) and was well nigh losing his life in reality, but was saved by the timely assistance of his wife. His first remark on being cut down was, "Jane, won't you please go after the doctor: I've twisted my neck dreadfully."

I also picked up, while travelling along the French Broad, the following bit of history connected with one of the handsomest plantations on said river. About forty years ago a young girl and her brother (who was a mere boy) found themselves in this portion of North Carolina, strangers, orphans, friendless, and with only the moneyed inheritance of one hundred and fifty dollars. With this money the girl bought a piece of land, and, her little brother having died, she hired herself out as a housekeeper. In process of time she married, gave her little property into the keeping of her husband, who squandered it, died a drunkard, and left her without a penny. By the kindness

of a friend she borrowed a couple of hundred dollars, and came to Ashville and opened a boarding-house. In the course of five years she made ten thousand dollars, married a second time, and by the profligacy and death of her second husband again lost every penny of her property. Years elapsed, and the unceasing industry of the poor widow was recompensed by the smiles of fortune, and she is now the owner of a large and valuable plantation, which is the fruit of her own individual toil, and a number of strong and manly sons are the comforts of her old age. But enough! I am now in Ashville, and at the conclusion of my letter.

LETTER XVII.

Ashville, North Carolina, May, 1848.

Twenty-five miles from this place, in a northerly direction, stands *Black Mountain*, which is the gloomy looking patriarch of the Alleghanies, and claimed to be the most elevated point of land eastward of the Mississippi. It is nearly seven thousand feet high, and, with its numerous pinnacles, covers an area of territory which must measure in length a distance of at least twenty miles. Unlike its fellows in this Southern land, it is covered with a dense forest from base to summit, where may be found nearly every variety of American trees, from the willow and the elm, to the oak and the Canada fir; and it is the parent of at least a hundred streams. Not a rood of its rocky and yet fertile surface has ever been cultivated, and its chief inhabitants are the panther, the bear, and the deer. Almost its only human denizen is one Frederick Burnet, a "mighty hunter," who is now upwards of forty years of age, and is said to have slain between five hundred and six hundred bears upon this mountain alone. To obtain an adequate idea of its height and grandeur, it should be viewed from at least a dozen points of the compass, and with regard to the circular and apparently boundless panorama which it commands, it can be far better imagined than described. On questioning one of the wild natives of the region as to the

character of this prospect, he replied: "Good God! sir, it looks down upon every seaport in the United States, and across the whole of Mexico." On learning this truly remarkable circumstance, my curiosity was of course excited, and I questioned my informant as to the facilities of looking off from the peak. "Directly on the highest point," said he, "stands a single fir-tree which you have to climb, and thus look down on all creation." "And how do you reach the summit?" I continued. "O! it's a very easy matter, stranger; you only have to *walk* about six miles, and right straight *up* the roughest country you ever *did* see."

With this intelligence I was fully satisfied, and thereupon concluded that I should waste none of my strength merely for the privilege of "climbing a tree," even though it were the most elevated in the land. One of my Asheville friends, however, to whom I had brought letters of introduction, spoke to me of the Black Mountain in the most enthusiastic terms, said that I ought to visit it, and added that he had gotten up a party of one dozen gentlemen, including himself, who were resolved upon visiting the foot of the mountain in my company. They were described as lovers of scenery, anglers, and hunters, and it was proposed that we should go on horseback, though accompanied by a kind of tender, consisting of a small wagon load of provisions, fishing-rods, and guns, which was to be under the especial charge of an old negro named Sam Drymond. I was of course delighted with this arrangement, and, as the expedition was accomplished to the satisfaction of all concerned, I will give an account of its principal incidents.

Our cavalcade started at the break of day, and, as Miss Fortune would have it, in what we imagined a morning

shower. It so happened, however, that it rained almost without ceasing until we reached our place of destination, which was a log shantee not far from the base of the Black Mountain, and about six miles from its summit. Our course lay up the valley of *the Swannanoah*, which, in spite of the rain, I could not but admire for its varied beauties. This river rises on the Black Mountain, is a charming tributary of the French Broad, from five to twenty yards in width, cold and clear, very rapid, and throughout its entire length is overshaded by a most luxuriant growth of graceful and sweet-scented trees and vines. The plantations on this stream are highly cultivated, the surrounding scenery is mountainous, graceful, and picturesque, and among the small but numerous waterfalls which make the first half of its course exceedingly romantic, may be enjoyed the finest of trout fishing.

To describe the appearance of our party as we ascended the Swannanoah, through the mud and rain, were quite impossible, without employing a military phrase. We looked more like a party of "used up" cavaliers, returning from an unfortunate siege, than one in pursuit of pleasure; and in spite of our efforts to be cheerful, a few of our faces were lengthened to an uncommon degree. Some of our company were decided characters, and a variety of professions were represented. Our captain was a banker, highly intelligent, and rode a superb horse; our second captain was a Lambert-like gentleman, with scarlet Mexican cloak: we had an editor with us, whose principal appendage was a long pipe; there was also a young physician, wrapped up in a blue blanket; also a young graduate, enveloped in a Spanish cloak, and riding a beautiful pony; also an artist, and then a farmer or two; also a merchant;

and last of all came the deponent, with an immense plaid blanket wrapped round his body, and a huge pair of boots hanging from his legs, whose romantic appearance was somewhat enhanced by the fact that his horse was the ugliest in the country. Long before reaching our place of destination, a freshet came pouring down the bed of the Swannanoah, and, as we had to ford it at least twenty times, we met with a variety of mishaps, which were particularly amusing. The most unique incident, however, was as follows: The party having crossed a certain ford, a motion was made that we should wait and see that old Drymond made the passage in safety. We did so, and spent about one hour on the margin of the stream, in a most impatient mood, for the old man travelled very slowly, and the clouds were pouring down the rain most abundantly. And what greatly added to our discomfort was the fact, that our horses got into a cluster of nettles, which made them almost unmanageable. In due time the negro made his appearance, and plunged into the stream. Hardly had he reached the middle, before his horse became unruly, and having broken entirely loose from the wagon, disappeared down the stream, leaving the vehicle in a most dangerous position, near the centre thereof, with a tremendous torrent rushing on either side, and the poor negro in the attitude of despair. He was indeed almost frightened to death; but his woe-begone appearance was so comical, that in spite of his real danger, and the prayer he offered, the whole party burst into a roar of laughter. One remark made by the negro was this: "O Massa, dis is de last o' poor old Drymond—his time's come." But it so happened that our old friend was rescued from a watery grave: but I am compelled to state that our provisions, which were now transferred, with

old Drymond, on the back of the horse, were greatly damaged, and we resumed our journey, with our spirits at a much lower ebb than the stream which had caused the mishap.

We arrived at a vacant cabin on the mountain, our place of destination, about noon, when the weather became clear, and our drooping spirits were revived. The cabin stood on the margin of the Swannanoah, and was completely hemmed in by immense forest trees. Our first movement was to fasten and feed the horses; and having satisfied our own appetites with a cold lunch, a portion of the company went a fishing, while the remainder secured the services of the hunter Burnet, and some half dozen of his hounds, and endeavored to kill a deer. At the sunset hour the anglers returned with a lot of two or three hundred trout, and the hunters with a handsome doe. With this abundant supply of forest delicacies, and a few "knick-knacks" that we had brought with us, we managed to get up a supper of the first water, but each man was his own cook, and our fingers and hands were employed in the place of knives and plates. While this interesting business was going on we dispatched Burnet after a fiddler, who occupied a cabin near his own, and when the musical gentleman made his appearance, we were ready for the "evening's entertainment."

We devoted two hours to a series of fantastic dances, and when we became tired of this portion of the frolic, we spent an hour or so in singing songs, and wound up the evening by telling stories. Of the hundred and one that were related, only two were at all connected with the Black Mountain, but as these were Indian legends, and gathered from different sources, by the gentlemen present, I will preserve them in this letter for the edification of those

interested in such matters. On the north side of Black Mountain there was once a cave, where all the animals in the world were closely confined; and before that time they had never been known to roam over the mountains as they do now. All these animals were in the keeping of an old Cherokee chief. This man, who had a mischievous son, often came home with a fine bear or deer, but would never tell his son or any other person where he found so much valuable game. The son did not like this, and on one occasion when his father went out after food he hid himself among the trees, and watched his movements. He saw the old man go to the cave, already mentioned, and, as he pushed away a big stone, out ran a fine buck, which he killed with an arrow, and then rolled back the stone. When the old man was gone home with his deer the boy went to the cave, and thought that he would try his luck in killing game. He rolled away the stone, when out jumped a wolf, which so frightened him that he forgot to replace the stone, and, before he knew what he was about, all the animals made their escape, and were fleeing down the mountain in every possible direction. They made a dreadful noise for a while, but finally came together in pairs, and so have continued to multiply down to the present time. When the father found out what the foolishness of his son had accomplished, he became very unhappy, and in less than a week he disappeared, and was never heard of again. The boy also became very unhappy, and spent many days in trying to find his father, but it was all in vain. As a last resort he tried an old Indian experiment which consisted in shooting arrows, to find out in which direction the old man had gone. The boy fired an arrow towards the north, but it returned and fell at his feet, and he knew that

his father had not travelled in that direction. He also fired one towards the east and the south and the west, but they all came back in the same manner. He then thought that he would fire one directly above his head, and it so happened that this arrow never returned, and so the boy knew that his father had gone to the spirit land. The Great Spirit was angry with the Cherokee nation, and to punish it for the offence of the foolish boy he tore away the cave from the side of the Black Mountain, and left only a large cliff in its place, which is now a conspicuous feature, and he then declared that the time would come when another race of men should possess the mountains where the Cherokees had flourished for many generations.

Another legend was as follows: Once, in the olden times, when the animals of the earth had the power of speech, a red deer and a terrapin met on the Black Mountain. The deer ridiculed the terrapin, boasted of his own fleetness, and proposed that the twain should run a race. The creeping animal assented to the proposition. The race was to extend from the Black Mountain to the summit of the third pinnacle extending to the eastward. The day was then fixed, and the animals separated. During the intervening time the cunning terrapin secured the services of three of its fellows resembling itself in appearance, and having given them particular directions, stationed them upon the several peaks over which the race was to take place. The appointed day arrived, and the deer, as well as the first mentioned terrapin, were faithfully on the ground. All things being ready, the word was given, and away started the deer at a break-neck speed. Just as he reached the summit of the first hill he heard the shout of a terrapin,

and as he supposed it to be his antagonist, he was greatly perplexed, but continued on his course. On reaching the top of the second hill, he heard another shout of defiance, and was more astonished than ever, but onward still did he continue. Just before reaching the summit of the third hill, the deer heard what he supposed to be the same shout, and he gave up the race in despair. On returning to the starting place, he found his antagonist in a calm and collected mood, and, when he demanded an explanation, the terrapin solved the mystery, and then begged the deer to remember that mind could sometimes accomplish what was often beyond the reach of the swiftest legs.

With regard to the manner in which our party spent the night at the foot of Black Mountain, I can only say that we slept upon the floor, and that our saddles were our only pillows. The morning of the next day we devoted to an unsuccessful hunt after a bear, and a portion of us having thrown the fly a sufficient length of time to load old Drymond with trout, we all started on our return to Ashville, and reached the village just as the sun was sinking behind the western mountains.

LETTER XVIII.

North Cove, North Carolina, June, 1848.

I now write from a log cabin situated on the Catawba river, and in one of the most beautiful of valleys. My ride from Ashville to Burnsville, a distance of over forty miles, was unattended by a single interesting incident, and afforded only one mountain prospect that caused me to rein in my horse. But the prospect alluded to embraced the entire outline of Bald Mountain, which, being one of the loftiest in this section of country, and particularly barren, presented a magnificent appearance. On the extreme summit of this mountain is a very large and an intensely cold spring of water, and in its immediate vicinity a small cave and the ruins of a log cabin, which are associated with a singular being named David Greer, who once made this upper world his home. He first appeared in this country about fifty years ago; his native land, the story of his birth, and his early history, were alike unknown. Soon after his arrival among the mountains, he fell desperately in love with the daughter of a farmer, but his suit was rejected by the maiden, and strenuously opposed by all her friends. Soon after this disappointment the lover suddenly disappeared, and was subsequently found residing on Bald Mountain in the cave already mentioned. Here he lived the life of a literary recluse, and is said to have written a

singular work upon religion, and another which purported to be a treatise on human government. In the latter production he proclaimed himself the sole proprietor of Bald Mountain, and made it known to the world that all who should ever become his neighbors must submit to the laws he had himself enacted. The prominent actions of his life were "few and far between," but particularly infamous. The first that brought him into notice was as follows: A few years after it was ascertained that he had taken possession of this mountain, the authorities of the county sent a messenger to Greer, and demanded a poll-tax of seventy-five cents. The hermit said he would attend to it on the next court-day, and his word was accepted. On the day in question Greer punctually made his appearance, but, instead of paying over the money, he pelted the windows of the court-house with stones, and drove the judges, lawyers, and clients all out of the village, and then, with rifle in hand, returned to his mountain dwelling. For some months after this event he amused himself by mutilating all the cattle which he happened to discover on what he called his domain, and it is said was in the habit of trying the power of his rifle by shooting down upon the plantations of his neighbors. The crowning event of David Greer's life, however, consisted in his shooting to the ground in cold blood, and in the broad daylight, a man named Higgins. The only excuse that he offered for committing this murder was that the deceased had been found hunting for deer on that portion of land which he claimed as his own. For this offence Greer was brought to trial and acquitted on the ground of insanity. When this decision was made known, the criminal was greatly enraged, and, when released, started for his cabin, muttering loud and deep curses

against the *injustice* of the laws. In process of time a number of attempts were made to take his life, and it was a common occurrence with him to be awakened at midnight by a ball passing through the door of his cabin. After living upon the mountain for a period of twenty years, he finally concluded to abandon his solitary life, and took up his abode in one of the settlements on the Tennessee side of Bald Mountain. Here, for a year or two, he worked regularly in an iron forge, but having had a dispute with a fellow-workman, swore that he would shoot him within five hours, and started after his rifle. The offending party was named Tompkins, and after consulting with his friends as to what course he ought to pursue, in view of the uttered threat, he was advised to take the law in his own hands. He took this advice, and, as David Greer was discovered walking along the road with rifle in hand, Tompkins shot him through the heart, and the burial-place of the hermit is now unknown. Public opinion was on the side of Tompkins, and he was never summoned to account for the defensive murder he had committed.

In coming from Burnsville to this place, I enjoyed two mountain landscapes, which were supremely beautiful and imposing. The first was a northern view of Black Mountain from the margin of the South Toe river, and all its cliffs, defiles, ravines, and peaks seemed as light, dream-like, and airy as the clear blue world in which they floated. The stupendous pile appeared to have risen from the earth with all its glories in their prime, as if to join the newly-risen sun in his passage across the heavens. The middle distance of the landscape was composed of two wood-crowned hills which stood before me like a pair of loving brothers, and then came a luxuriant meadow, where a

noble horse was quietly cropping his food; while the immediate foreground of the picture consisted of a marvellously beautiful stream, which glided swiftly by, over a bed of golden and scarlet pebbles. The only sounds that fell upon my ear, as I gazed upon this scene, were the murmurings of a distant water-fall, and the hum of insect wings.

The other prospect that I witnessed was from the summit of the Blue Ridge, looking in the direction of the Catawba. It was a wilderness of mountains, whose foundations could not be fathomed by the eye, while in the distance, towering above all the peaks, rose the singular and fantastic form of *the Table Mountain*. Not a sign of the breathing human world could be seen in any direction, and the only living creature which appeared to my view was a solitary eagle, wheeling to and fro far up towards the zenith of the sky.

From the top of the Blue Ridge I descended a winding ravine four miles in length, where the road, even at mid-day, is in deep shadow, and then I emerged into the North Cove. This charming valley is twelve miles long, from a half to a whole mile in width, completely surrounded with mountains, highly cultivated, watered by the Catawba, and inhabited by intelligent and worthy farmers. At a certain house where I tarried to dine on my way up the valley, I was treated in a manner that would have put to the blush people of far greater pretensions; and, what made a deep impression on my mind, was the fact that I was waited upon by two sisters, about ten years of age, who were remarkably beautiful and sprightly. One of them had flaxen hair and blue eyes, and the other deep black hair and eyes. Familiar as I had been for weeks past with the

puny and ungainly inhabitants of the mountain tops, these two human flowers filled my heart with a delightful sensation. May the lives of those two darlings be as peaceful and beautiful as the stream upon which they live! The prominent pictorial feature of the North Cove is of a mountain called *the Hawk's Bill,* on account of its resemblance to the beak of a mammoth bird, the length of the bill being about fifteen hundred feet. It is visible from nearly every part of the valley, and to my fancy is a more *picturesque* object than the Table Mountain, which is too regular at the sides and top to satisfy the eye. The table part of this mountain, however, is twenty-five hundred feet high, and therefore worthy of its fame.

The cabin where I am stopping at the present time is located at the extreme upper end of the North Cove. It is the residence of the best guide in the country, and the most convenient lodging place for those who would visit the Hawk's Bill and Table Mountains, already mentioned, as well as the Lindville Pinnacle, the Catawba Cave, the Cake Mountain, the Lindville Falls, and the Roan Mountain.

The *Lindville Pinnacle* is a mountain peak, surmounted by a pile of rocks, upon which you may recline at your ease, and look down upon a complete series of rare and gorgeous scenes. On one side is a precipice which seems to descend to the very bowels of the earth; in another direction you have a full view of *Short-off Mountain,* only about a mile off, which is a perpendicular precipice several thousand feet high, and the abrupt termination of a long range of mountains; in another direction still the eye falls upon a brotherhood of mountain peaks which are particularly ragged and fantastic in their formation—now

shooting forward, as if to look down into the valleys, and now looming to the sky, as if to pierce it with their pointed summits; and in another direction you look across what seems to be a valley from eighty to a hundred miles wide, which is bounded by a range of mountains that seem to sweep across the world as with triumphal march.

The *Catawba Cave*, situated on the Catawba river, is entered by a fissure near the base of a mountain, and is reputed to be one mile in length. It has a great variety of chambers, which vary in height from six to twenty feet; its walls are chiefly composed of a porous limestone, through which the water is continually dripping; and along the entire length flows a cold and clear stream, which varies from five to fifteen inches in depth. This cave is indeed a curious affair, though the trouble and fatigue attending a thorough exploration far outweigh the satisfaction which it affords. But there is one arm of the cave which has never been explored, and an admirable opportunity is therefore offered for the adventurous to make themselves famous by revealing some of the hidden wonders of nature.

The *Ginger Cake Mountain* derives its very poetical name from a singular pile of rocks occupying its extreme summit. The pile is composed of two masses of rock of different materials and form, which are so arranged as to stand on a remarkably small base. The lower section is composed of a rough slate stone, and its form is that of an inverted pyramid; but the upper section of the pile consists of an oblong slab of solid granite, which surmounts the lower section in a horizontal position, presenting the appearance of a work of art. The lower section is thirty feet in altitude, while the upper one is thirty-two feet in length, eighteen in breadth, and nearly two feet in thick-

ness. The appearance of this rocky wonder is exceedingly tottleish, and though we may be assured that it has stood upon that eminence perhaps for a thousand years, yet it is impossible to tarry within its shadow without a feeling of insecurity. The individual who gave the Ginger Cake Mountain its outlandish name was a hermit named Watson, who resided at the foot of the mountain about fifty years ago, but who died in 1816. He lived in a small cabin, and entirely alone. His history was a mystery to every one but himself, and, though remarkably eccentric, he was noted for his amiability. He had given up the world, like his brother hermit of the Bald Mountain, on account of a disappointment in love, and the utter contempt which he ever afterwards manifested for the gentler sex, was one of his most singular traits of character. Whenever a party of ladies paid him a visit, which was frequently the case, he invariably treated them politely, but would never *speak* to them; he even went so far in expressing his dislike as to consume for firewood, after the ladies were gone, the topmost rail of his yard-fence, over which they had been compelled to pass, on their way into his cabin. That old Watson "fared sumptuously every day" could not be denied, but whence came the money that supported him no one could divine. He seldom molested the wild animals of the mountain where he lived, and his chief employments seemed to be *the raising of peacocks*, and the making of garments for his own use, which were all elegantly trimmed off with the fathers of his favorite bird. The feathery suit in which he kept himself constantly arrayed he designated as his *culgee;* the meaning of which word could never be ascertained; and long after the deluded being had passed away from among the living he was spoken of as Culgee Watson, and is so remembered to this day.

I come now to speak of *the Lindville Falls*, which are situated on the Lindville river, a tributary of the beautiful Catawba. They are literally embosomed among mountains, and long before seeing them do you hear their musical roar. The scenery about them is as wild as it was a hundred years ago—not even a pathway has yet been made to guide the tourist into the stupendous gorge where they reign supreme. At the point in question the Lindville is about one hundred and fifty feet broad, and though its waters have come down their parent mountains at a most furious speed, they here make a more desperate plunge than they ever dared to attempt before, when they find themselves in a deep pool and suddenly hemmed in by a barrier of gray granite, which crosses the entire bed of the river. In their desperation, however, they finally work a passage through the solid rock, and after filling another hollow with foam, they make a desperate leap of at least one hundred feet, and find a resting place in an immense pool, which one might easily imagine to be bottomless. And then, as if attracted by the astonishing feats performed by the waters, a number of lofty and exceedingly fantastic cliffs have gathered themselves together in the immediate neighborhood, and are ever peering over each other's shoulders into the depths below. But as the eye wanders from the surrounding cliffs, it falls upon an isolated column several hundred feet high, around which are clustered in the greatest profusion the most beautiful of vines and flowers. This column occupies a conspicuous position a short distance below the Falls, and it were an easy matter to imagine it a monument erected by Nature to celebrate her own creative power.

With a liberal hand, indeed, has she planted her forest trees in every imaginable place; but with a view of even sur-

passing herself, she has filled the gorge with a variety of caverns, which astonish the beholder, and almost cause him to dread an attack from a brotherhood of spirits. But how futile is my effort to give an adequate idea of the Lindville Falls and their surrounding attractions! When I attempted to sketch them I threw away my pencil in despair; and I now feel that I should be doing my pen a kindness, if I were to consume what I have written. I will give this paragraph to the world, however, trusting that those who may hereafter visit the Lindville Falls, will award to me a little credit for my *will* if not for my *deed*.

To be in keeping with my wayward wanderings in this Alpine wilderness, it now becomes my duty to speak of the *Roan Mountain* and the *Grand Father*. By actual measurement the former is only seventy feet lower than the Black Mountain, and consequently measures well nigh to seven thousand feet. It derives its name from the circumstance that it is often covered with snow, and at such times is of a roan color. It lies in the States of North Carolina and Tennessee, and has three prominent peaks, which are all entirely destitute of trees. The highest of them has a clearing containing several thousand acres, and the cattle and horses of the surrounding farmers resort to it in immense numbers, for the purpose of feeding upon the fine and luxuriant grass which grows there in great abundance. The ascent to the top of this peak is gradual from all directions except one, but on the north it is quite perpendicular, and to one standing near the brow of the mighty cliff the scene is exceedingly imposing and fearful. That it commands an uninterrupted view of what appears to be the entire world, may be readily imagined. When I was there I observed no less than three thunder storms

performing their uproarious feats in three several valleys, while the remaining portions of the lower world were enjoying a deep blue atmosphere. In visiting Roan Mountain you have to travel on horseback, and, by starting at the break of day, you may spend two hours on the highest peak, and be home again on the same evening about the sunset hour.

In accounting for the baldness which characterizes the Roan Mountain, the Catawba Indians relate the following tradition: There was once a time when all the nations of the earth were at war with the Catawbas, and had proclaimed their determination to conquer and possess their country. On hearing this intelligence the Catawbas became greatly enraged, and sent a challenge to all their enemies, and dared them to a fight on the summit of the Roan. The challenge was accepted, and no less than three famous battles were fought—the streams of the entire land were red with blood, a number of tribes became extinct, and the Catawbas carried the day. Whereupon it was that the Great Spirit caused the forests to wither from the three peaks of the Roan Mountain where the battles were fought; and wherefore it is that the flowers which grow upon this mountain are chiefly of a crimson hue, for they are nourished by the blood of the slain.

One of the finest views from the Roan Mountain is that of the Grand Father, which is said to be altogether the wildest and most fantastic mountain in the whole Alleghany range. It is reputed to be 5,600 feet high, and particularly famous for its black bears and other large game. Its principal human inhabitants, par excellence, for the last twenty years, have been a man named *Jim Riddle*, and his loving spouse, whose cabin was near its summit. A more suc-

cessful hunter than Jim never scaled a precipice ; and the stories related of him would fill a volume. One of the funniest that I now remember, is briefly as follows :—

He was out upon a hunting expedition, and having come to one of his bear traps, (made of logs, weighing about a thousand pounds, and set with a kind of figure four,) the bait of which happened to be misplaced, he thoughtlessly laid down his gun, and went under the trap to arrange the bait. In doing this, he handled the bait hook a little too roughly, and was consequently caught in the place of a bear. He chanced to have a small hatchet in his belt, with which, under every disadvantage, he succeeded in cutting his way out. He was one day and one night in doing this, however, and his narrow escape caused him to abandon the habit of swearing, and become a religious man.

To the comprehension of Jim Riddle, the Grand Father was the highest mountain in the world. He used to say that he had read of the Andes, but did not believe that they were half as high as the mountain on which he lived. His reason for this opinion was, that when a man stood on the top of the Grand Father, it was perfectly obvious that "*all the other mountains in the world lay rolling from it, even to the sky.*"

Jim Riddle is said to have been a remarkably certain marksman ; and one of his favorite pastimes, in the winter, was to shoot at snow-balls. On these occasions, his loving wife, Betsey, was always by his side, to laugh at him when he missed his mark, and to applaud when successful. And it is reported of them, that they were sometimes in the habit of spending entire days in this *elevated* recreation. But

enough; Jim Riddle is now an altered man. His cabin has long since been abandoned, and he has become a travelling preacher, and is universally respected for his amiability, and matter-of-fact intelligence.

LETTER XIX.

Elizabethton, Tennessee, June, 1848.

The prominent circumstance attending my journey from the North Cove to this place was, that it brought me out of the great mountain wilderness of Georgia and North Carolina into a well-cultivated and more level country. For two months past have I spent my days on horseback, and the majority of my nights in the rudest of cabins; and as I am now to continue my journey in a stagecoach, it is meet that I should indite a general letter, descriptive of the region through which I have passed. In coming from Dahlonega to this place, I have travelled in a zigzag course upwards of four hundred miles, but the intervening distance, in a direct line, would not measure more than two hundred. The entire country is mountainous, and for the most part remains in its original state of nature. To the botanist and the geologist, this section of the Union is unquestionably the most interesting eastward of the Mississippi, for we have here nearly every variety of forest trees known in the land, as well as plants and flowers in the greatest abundance, while the mountains, which are of a primitive formation, abound in every known variety of minerals. That the scenery of this region is highly interesting, I hope my readers have already been convinced. More beautiful streams can nowhere be found on the face

of the earth. But, when we come to speak of lake scenery, the South must yield the palm to the North. Not a single sheet of water deserving the name of lake have I yet seen in this Southern land, and yet every mountain seems to be well supplied with the largest and the coldest of springs. I know not but this fact has been explained by our scientific men, but to me it is indeed a striking peculiarity. The valleys, too, of this region, are remarkably narrow, and the majority of them might with more propriety be called immense ravines. The skies, however, which canopy this Alpine land, appeared to me to be particularly blue, and as to the clouds which gather around the mountains at the sunset hour, they are gorgeous beyond compare.

With regard to climate, I know of no section of country that can be compared with the highlands of Georgia and North Carolina. It is but seldom that a foot of snow covers the earth even in the severest winters; and, though the days of midsummer are very warm, they are seldom sultry, and the nights are invariably sufficiently cool to make one or two blankets comfortable. Fevers and other diseases peculiar to the sea-side of the Alleghanies are hardly known among their inhabitants, and heretofore the majority of people have died of old age. I would not intimate that they are afflicted with an epidemic at the present time, but I do say that there are many households in this region, which have been rendered very desolate by the Mexican war. When our *kingly* President commanded the American people to leave the plough in the furrow and invade a neighboring republic, the mountaineers of Georgia and the Carolinas poured down into the valley almost without bidding their mothers, and wives, and sisters a final adieu; and the bones of at least one half of these brave men are

now mouldering away on the desert sands of the far South.

Generally speaking, the soil of this country is fertile, yielding the best of corn, potatoes, and rye, but only an average quality of wheat, on account of the late frosts. In some of the more extensive valleys, the apple and the peach arrive at perfection; and while the former are manufactured into cider, out of the latter the mountaineers make a very palatable brandy. The principal revenue of the people, however, is derived from the business of raising cattle, which is practised to a considerable extent. The mountain ranges afford an abundance of the sweetest grazing food, and all that the farmer has to do in the autumn is to hunt up his stock, which have now become excessively fat, and drive them to the Charleston or Baltimore market. The only drawback to this business consists in the fact that the cattle in certain sections of the country are subject to what is called the milk sickness. This disease is supposed to be caused by a poisonous dew which gathers on the grass, and is said not only to have destroyed a great many cattle in other years, but frequently caused the death of entire families who may have partaken of the unwholesome milk. It is a dreaded disease, and principally fatal in the autumn. From the foregoing remarks it will be seen that a mountain farmer may be an agriculturist, and yet have an abundance of time to follow any other employment that he has a passion for; and the result of this fact is, that he is generally a faithful disciple of the immortal Nimrod.

All the cabins that I have visited have been ornamented by at least one gun, and more than one-half of the inhabitants have usually been hounds. That the mountaineers are

poor, is a matter of course, and the majority of their cabins are cheerless places indeed to harbor the human frame for life; but the people are distinguished for their hospitality, and always place before the stranger the choicest of their store. Bacon, game, and milk are their staple articles of food, and honey is their principal luxury. In religion, generally speaking, they are Methodists and Baptists, and are distinguished for their sobriety. They have but few opportunities of hearing good preaching, but I have never entered more than three or four cabins where I did not see a copy of the Bible. The limited knowledge they possess has come to them directly from Heaven as it were, and, from the necessity of the case, their children are growing up in the most deplorable ignorance. Whenever one of these poor families happened to learn from my conversation that I was a resident of New-York, the interest with which they gazed upon me and listened to my every word, was both agreeable and painful. It made me happy to communicate what little I happened to know, but pained me to think upon their isolated and uncultivated manner of life. Give me the wilderness for a day or month, but for life I must be amid the haunts of refinement and civilization. As to the slave population of the mountain districts, it is so limited that I can hardly express an opinion with regard to their condition. Not more than one white man in ten (perhaps I ought to say twenty) is sufficiently wealthy to support a slave, and those who do possess them are in the habit of treating them as intelligent beings and in the most kindly manner. As I have found it to be the case on the seaboard, the slaves residing among the mountains are the happiest and most independent portion of the population;

and I have had many a one pilot me over the mountains who would not have exchanged places even with his master. They have a comfortable house and no debts to pay: every thing they need in the way of clothing and wholesome food is ever at their command, and they have free access to the churches and the Sunday schools of the land. What more do the poor of any country possess that can add to their temporal happiness?

Another, and of course the most limited portion of the population occupying this mountain country, is what might be called the aristocracy or gentry. Generally speaking, they are descended from the best of families, and moderately wealthy. They are fond of good living, and their chief business is to make themselves as comfortable as possible. They esteem solid enjoyment more than display, and are far more intelligent (so far as books and the world are concerned) than the same class of people at the North. The majority of Southern gentlemen, I believe, would be glad to see the institution of slavery abolished, if it could be brought about without reducing them to beggary. But they hate a *political* Abolitionist as they do the very—*Father of Lies;* and for this want of affection I do not see that they deserve to be blamed. The height of a Southern man's ambition is to be a gentleman in every particular—in word, thought, and deed; and to be a perfect gentleman, in my opinion, is to be a Christian. And with regard to the much-talked-of hospitality of the wealthier classes in the South, I can only say that my own experience ought to make me very eloquent in their praise. Not only does the genuine feeling exist here, but a Southern gentleman gives such expression to his feeling by his home-like treatment of

you, that to be truly hospitable you might imagine had been the principal study of his life.

But the music of the "mellow horn" is ringing in my ear, and in an hour from this time I shall have thrown myself into a stagecoach, and be on my way up the long and broad valley of Virginia.

LETTER XX.

The Nameless Valley, Virginia, June, 1848.

Since my last letter was written, my course of travel has led me towards the fountain-head of the Holston river, whose broad and highly cultivated valley is bounded on the northwest by the Clinch Mountains, and on the southeast by the Iron Mountains. The agricultural and mineral advantages of this valley are manifold, and the towns and farms scattered along the stage-road all present a thriving and agreeable appearance. Along the bed of the Holston agates and cornelians are found in considerable abundance; and though the scenery of its valley is merely beautiful, I know of no district in the world where caves and caverns are found in such great numbers. A zigzag tour along this valley alone will take the traveller to at least one dozen caves, many of which are said to be remarkably interesting. From my own observation, however, I know nothing about them; and so long as I retain my passion for the revealed productions of nature, I will leave the hidden ones to take care of themselves.

On reaching the pleasant little village of Abingdon, in Washington county, a friend informed me that I must not fail to visit the salt-works of Smythe county. I did so, and the following is my account of Saltville, which is the proper name for the place in question: Its site was originally a salt-lick, to which immense herds of elk, buffalo, and deer,

were in the habit of resorting; subsequently, the Indians applied the privilege to themselves, and then an occasional hunter came here for his supplies; but the regular business of transforming the water into salt did not commence until the year 1790. Saltville is located at the head of a valley near the base of the Clinch Mountains, and about one mile from the Holston river. All the population of the place, numbering perhaps three hundred inhabitants, are engaged in the manufacture of salt. The water here is said to be the strongest and purest in the world. When tested by a salometer, graded for saturation at twenty-five degrees, it ranges from twenty to twenty-two degrees, and twenty gallons of water will yield one bushel of salt, which weighs fifty pounds, (and not fifty-six as at the North,) and is sold at the rate of twenty cents per bushel, or one dollar and twenty cents per barrel. The water is brought from a depth of two hundred and twenty feet by means of three artesian wells, which keep five furnaces or salt-blocks, of eighty-four kettles each, in constant employment, and produce about two thousand bushels per day. The water is raised by means of horse-power, and twenty-five teams are constantly employed in supplying the furnaces with wood. The salt manufactured here is acknowledged to be superior in quality to that made on the Kanawha, in this State, or at Syracuse, in New-York, but the Northern establishments are by far the most extensive. The section of country supplied from this quarter is chiefly composed of Tennessee and Alabama; generally speaking, there is but one shipment made during the year, which is in the spring, and by means of flat-boats built expressly for the purpose. A dozen or two of these boats are always ready for business, and when the Holston is swollen by a freshet they are

loaded and manned at the earliest possible moment, and away the singing boatmen go down the wild, winding, and narrow but picturesque stream, to their desired havens. The section of country supplied by the Kanawha is the northwest and the extreme south, while Syracuse, Liverpool, and Turk's Island supply the Atlantic seaboard. The Saltville reservoir of water seems to be inexhaustible, and it is supposed would give active employment to at least a dozen new furnaces. As already stated, the yielding wells are somewhat over two hundred feet deep; but within a stone's throw of these, other wells have been sunk to the depth of four, five, and six hundred feet, without obtaining a particle of the valuable liquid. The business of Saltville is carried on by private enterprise altogether, and the principal proprietor and director is a gentleman who comes from that noble stock which has given to this country such men as Patrick Henry and William H. Preston. I am at present the guest of this gentleman, and therefore refrain from giving his name to the public; but as his plantation is decidedly the most beautiful that I have seen in the whole Southern country, I must be permitted to give a particular description for the edification of my readers.

This heretofore nameless nook of the great world I have been permitted to designate as *The Nameless Valley*, and if I succeed in merely enumerating its charming features and associations, I feel confident that my letter will be read with pleasure. It is the centre of a domain comprising eight thousand acres of land, which covers a multitude of hills that are all thrown in shadow at the sunset hour by the Clinch Mountains. The valley in question is one mile by three-quarters of a mile wide, and comprises exactly three hundred and thirty-three acres of green

meadow land, unbroken by a single fence, but ornamented by about a dozen isolated trees, composed of at least half a dozen varieties, and the valley is watered by a tiny stream of the clearest water. It is completely surrounded with cone-like hills, which are nearly all highly cultivated half way up their sides, but crowned with a diadem of the most luxuriant forest trees. A little back of the hills, skirting the western side of the valley, are the picturesquely broken Clinch Mountains, whose every outline, and cliff, and fissure, and ravine, may be distinctly seen from the opposite side of the valley, where the spacious and tastefully porticoed mansion of the proprietor is located. Clustering immediately around this dwelling, but not so as to interrupt the view, are a number of very large willows, poplars, and elms, while the inclosed slope upon which it stands is covered with luxuriant grass, here and there enlivened by a stack of roses and other flowers. The numerous outhouses of the plantation are a little back of the main building, and consist of neatly painted cabins, occupied by the negroes belonging to the estate, and numbering about one hundred souls; then come the stables, where no less than seventy-five horses are daily supplied with food; then we have a pasture on the hill side, where thirty or forty cows nightly congregate to be milked, and give suck to their calves; and then we have a mammoth spring, whose waters issue out of the mountain, making only about a dozen leaps, throwing themselves upon the huge wheel of an old mill, causing it to sing a kind of circling song from earliest dawn to the twilight hour. In looking to the westward from the spacious porticoes of the mansion, the eye falls upon only two objects which are at all calculated to destroy the natural solitude of the place, viz. a road

which passes directly by the house at the foot of the lawn, and one small white cottage situated at the base of a hill on the opposite side of the valley. Instead of detracting from the scene, however, these objects actually make it more interesting, when the facts are remembered that in that cottage did the proprietor of this great estate first see the light, and that by its side are deposited the remains of five generations of his ancestors; and as to the road, the people who travel it all appear and move along just exactly as a poet would desire.

But to give my readers a more graphic idea of this truly delightful valley, I will enumerate the living pictures which attracted my attention from the book I was attempting to read on a single afternoon. I was in a commanding corner of the porch, and had closed the volume just as the sun was sinking behind the mountain. The sky was of a soft silvery hue, and almost cloudless, and the entire landscape was bathed in an exquisitely soft and delightful atmosphere. Not a breeze was stirring in the valley, and the cool shadows of the trees were twice as long as the trees themselves. The first noise that broke the silence of the scene was a slow thumping and creaking sound away down the road, and on casting my eyes in the right direction I discovered a large wain, or covered wagon, drawn by seven horses, and driven by a man who amused himself as he lazily moved along, by snapping his whip at the harmless plants by the road-side. I know not whence he came or whither he was going, but twenty minutes must have flown before he passed out of my view. At one time a flood of discord came to my ear from one of the huge poplars in the yard, and I could see that there was a terrible dispute going on between a lot of resident and stranger blackbirds; and,

after they had ceased their noise, I could hear the chirping of the swallows, as they swooped after the insects, floating in the sunbeams, far away over the green valley. And now I heard a laugh and the sound of talking voices, and lo! a party of ten negroes, who were returning from the fields where they had been cutting hay or hoeing corn. The neighing and stamping of a steed now attracted my attention, and I saw a superb blood horse attempting to get away from a negro groom, who was leading him along the road. The mellow tinkling of a bell and the lowing of cattle now came trembling on the air, and presently, a herd of cows made their appearance, returning home from the far-off hills with udders brimming full, and kicking up a dust as they lounged along. Now the sun dropped behind the hills, and one solitary night-hawk shot high up into the air, as if he had gone to welcome the evening star, which presently made its appearance from its blue watchtower: and, finally, a dozen women came trooping from the cow-yard into the dairy house, with well-filled milk-pails on their heads, and looking like a troop of Egyptic water damsels. And then for one long hour did the spirits of repose and twilight have complete possession of the valley, and no sound fell upon my ear but the hum of insect wings.

But I was intending to mention the curiosities of the Nameless Valley. Foremost among these I would rank a small cave, on the south side, in which are deposited a curious collection of human bones. Many of them are very large, while others, which were evidently full-grown, are exceedingly small. Among the female skulls I noticed one of a female that seemed to be perfectly beautiful, but small enough to have belonged to a child. The most curious

specimen, however, found in this cave, is the skull of a man. It is entirely without a forehead, very narrow across the eyes, full and regularly rounded behind, and from the lower part of the ears are two bony projections, nearly two inches in length, which must have presented a truly terrible appearance when covered with flesh. The animal organs of this skull are remarkably full, and it is also greatly deficient in all the intellectual faculties. Another curiosity in this valley is a bed of plaster which lies in the immediate vicinity of a bed of slate, with a granite and limestone strata only a short distance off, the whole constituting a geological conglomeration that I never heard of before. But what is still more remarkable is the fact, that within this plaster bed was found the remains of an unknown animal, which must have been a mammoth indeed. A grinder tooth belonging to this monster I have seen and examined. It has a blackish appearance, measures about ten inches in length, weighs four pounds and a half, and was found only three feet from the surface. This tooth, as well as the skull already mentioned, were discovered by the proprietor of the valley, and, I am glad to learn, are about to be deposited by him in the National Museum at Washington. But another attractive feature in the Nameless Valley consists of a kind of Indian Herculaneum, where, deeply imbedded in sand and clay, are the remains of a town, whence have been brought to light a great variety of earthen vessels and curious utensils. Upon this spot, also, many shells have been found, which are said never to have been seen excepting on the shore of the Pacific. But all these things should be described by the antiquarian, and I only mention them for the purpose of letting the world know that there is literally no end to the wonders of our beautiful land.

I did think of sketching a few of the many charming views which present themselves from the hills surrounding the Nameless Valley, but I am not exactly in the mood just now, and I will leave them "in their glory alone." Connected with a precipice on one of them, however, I have this incident to relate. For an hour or more had I been watching the evolutions of a superb bald-headed eagle above the valley, when, to my surprise, he suddenly became excited, and darted down with intense swiftness towards the summit of the cliff alluded to, and disappeared among the trees. A piercing shriek followed this movement, and I anticipated a combat between the eagle and a pair of fish-hawks which I knew had a nest upon the cliff. In less than five minutes after this assault, the eagle again made his appearance, but uttered not a sound, and, having flown to the opposite side of the valley, commenced performing a circle, in the most graceful manner imaginable. Presently the two hawks also made their appearance high above their rocky home, and proceeded to imitate the movements of the eagle. At first the two parties seemed to be indifferent to each other, but on observing them more closely it was evident that they were gradually approaching each other, and that their several circles were rapidly lessening. On reaching an elevation of perhaps five thousand feet, they finally interfered with each other, and, having joined issue, a regular battle commenced, and as they ascended, the screams of the hawks gradually became inaudible, and in a short time the three royal birds were entirely lost to view in the blue zenith.

Before closing this letter, I wish to inform my readers of a natural curiosity lying between the Clinch and Cum-

berland Mountains, and distant from this place only about a day's journey. I allude to what is called the Natural Tunnel. It is in Scott county, and consists of a subterranean channel through a ragged limestone hill, the entire bed of which is watered by a running stream about twenty feet wide. The cavern is four hundred and fifty feet long, from sixty to eighty feet in height, about seventy in width, and of a serpentine form. On either side of the hill through which this tunnel passes are perpendicular cliffs, some of which are three hundred feet high and exceedingly picturesque. The gloomy aspect of this tunnel, even at mid-day, is very imposing; for when standing near the centre neither of its outlets can be seen, and it requires hardly an effort of the fancy for a man to deem himself for ever entombed within the bowels of the earth.

LETTER XXI.

HARPER'S FERRY, June, 1848.

SINCE the date of my last letter, I have been travelling through a very beautiful but thickly-settled portion of the Alleghany country, whose natural curiosities are as familiar to the world as a thrice-told tale. For this reason, therefore, I shall be exceedingly brief in describing what I have seen in the Valley of Virginia. That portion of the "Ancient Dominion" known by the above name is about two hundred miles long, ranging in width from thirty to forty miles. It is bounded on the north by the Potomac, on the east by the Blue Ridge, on the west by a spur of the Alleghanies called the North Mountains, and on the south by the New River, or Kanawha, as it should be called. Its principal streams are the Shenandoah, the James River, and the Cacapon, which are in every way worthy of their parent country. In ascending to the north, I was tempted to perform a pilgrimage down the Kanawha, but my map told me that I could not see the whole of its valley without travelling at least two hundred miles, and I therefore concluded that its charming scenery, its famous salt-works, and the still more celebrated White Sulphur Springs, should remain undescribed by my pen. In fact, to visit all the interesting objects among the Alleghany Mountains would occupy a number of summers, and therefore, in making a single

tour, I have found it important to discriminate as I passed along. But it is time that I should turn my attention to the prominent attractions of the great Virginia Valley. They are as follows, and I shall speak of them in the order in which I visited them, viz.: the Peaks of Otter, the Natural Bridge, Wyer's Cave, Cyclopean Towers, the Shenandoah, and Harper's Ferry.

The Peaks of Otter are situated upon the line which separates the counties of Bedford and Bottetourt, and are the two highest mountains on the Blue Ridge range, and therefore the highest in Virginia. They derive their name from the fact that, at a very early period in the history of our country, the otter was found in great abundance in the smaller streams at their base. In appearance they resemble a pair of regularly formed haystacks, and reach an elevation of about five thousand feet above the level of the ocean. Owing to the circumstance that the country on one side is nearly level, and that the surrounding mountains are comparatively low, their appearance is exceedingly imposing. The summits of these watchtowers are destitute of vegetation, but crowned with immense rocks, which have been scattered about in the most incomprehensible confusion. And hereby hangs a story. About one year ago, a number of persons ascended the highest peak in question, and having discovered an immense rock, which appeared to be in a tottleish position, they took into their heads to give it a start down the mountain side, and see what would be the result. They accomplished their purpose and something more, for it so happened that the rock travelled much further than they expected, and having fallen into a very large spring at the foot of the mountain, caused it to disappear from the face of the earth. The owner of the spring felt

himself injured by this circumstance, and went to law about it, and the offending parties, as I have been informed, were compelled to pay a heavy bill of damages. That the sunrise and sunset prospects from the Peaks of Otter are superb may readily be imagined. Those which present themselves on the north, west, and south, seem to comprise the entire Appalachian chain of mountains, but the oceanward panorama is unique and particularly impressive. In this direction the whole eastern portion of Virginia resembles a boundless plain, where even the most extensive plantations appear no larger than the squares upon a chessboard; and now that I have employed that figure, it strikes me as particularly appropriate; for where is there a man on the face of the earth who is not playing a game for the attainment of happiness? From their position, the Peaks of Otter look down upon all the fogs and vapors born of the sea breezes, and, by those who have frequently beheld their fantastic evolutions, I am told that they surpass even the wildest flights of poetry. Few mountains in this country have been visited by so many distinguished men as the Peaks of Otter; and it is said that it was while standing on their loftiest pinnacle that John Randolph first had a realizing sense of the existence and the power of God. To some minds a mountain peak may be a thousand-fold more eloquent than the voice of man; and when I think of the highly moral condition of the people in Central Virginia, I am constrained to award a mite of praise even to the Peaks of Otter for their happy influences.

It was a thousand years ago, and a mighty caravan of mammoths were travelling across the American continent. Midway between two ranges of mountains they came to a great ravine, over which they could not find a passage, and

they were in despair. The Great Spirit took pity upon the animals, and having brought a deep sleep upon them, threw a mass of solid rock completely across the ravine, and so, according to an almost forgotten Indian legend, came into existence the Natural Bridge of Virginia. The chasm over which this magnificent limestone arch has been formed varies from sixty to ninety feet in width, the surrounding precipices are nearly two hundred and fifty feet high and perpendicular, and the lower line of the narrow arch itself is two hundred feet above the stream which passes through the gorge. The bridge and its cliff-like abutments are all crowned with a luxuriant diadem of trees, which lends them an indescribable charm, and directly on the north side of the former stands an exceedingly picturesque gallery or parapet of solid rock, which seems to have been formed by Nature for the especial purpose of affording the most imposing prospect into the dell. From every elevated point of view the eye falls into an abyss, which one might easily fancy to be the birthplace of all the shadows in the world, the gray and green gloom is so deep, so purely beautiful, and so refreshing, even at the hour of noon; but from every point of view at the bottom of the dell, the stupendous arch, as some writer has finely said, "seems to offer a passage to the skies," and the massive masonry of Nature stands boldly out against the blue heavens, thereby producing a most unique and poetical contrast. But the location of this bridge is not less beautiful than its structure. It is completely surrounded with hills, which seem to cluster around the rare spectacle, as if to protect it from sacrilege; and from the hills in question the eye is every where delighted with mountain landscapes of uncommon loveliness.

Wyer's Cave is in Augusta county, and the entrance

to it is from the side of a limestone hill, which commands a very charming prospect of the highly cultivated Valley of the Shenandoah. It was originally discovered by one Bernard Wyer in the year 1804, whose fortune it was to capture a bear within a few paces of its entrance. Its entire length is not far from one thousand yards, so that its size is not to be wondered at; but when you come to speak of its beauty, the variety, number, and imposing appearance of its apartments, the novelty of its concretions, its fantastic projections, its comparative freedom from dampness, and the whiteness of its walls, I suppose it must be considered as unsurpassed by any thing of the kind in the country, excepting the Cave of Kentucky. But the pleasure of roaming about this darksome emblem of perdition is greatly enhanced by the huge pine torches which you and your guide have to carry over your heads, and then if you can possibly bribe your friend *not* to utter a single one of the abominably classical names with which all the nooks and corners of the cave have been christened, your gratification will indeed be real, and your impressions strange, unearthly, and long-to-be-remembered in your dreams. To enjoy a visit to this cave, as it ought to be enjoyed, a man ought to have an entire summer day at his disposal; ought to be alone, should have a torch that should need no trimming, and under his arm a well-printed copy of Dante. Thus prepared, his enjoyment would be truly exquisite.

The Cyclopean Towers are also in Augusta county, and were so called on account of their resemblance to the Cyclopean walls of the ancients. They are formed of limestone, and as they stand at the outlet of a valley, through which it is probable a mighty river once flowed, they were evidently formed by the water while forcing its way around

the point of the neighboring hill. There are five or six of them, and they vary from forty to ninety feet from base to summit, and are covered with trees. When viewed at the twilight hour they appear like the mouldering ruins of a once magnificent castle, and the wildness of the surrounding scenery is not at all calculated to dissipate this illusion.

With regard to the Valley of the Shenandoah, I can only say that a more beautiful section of country I have never seen. The soil is exceedingly rich and highly cultivated; its yeomanry are descended from the German population of the older times; and throughout all its borders, I am certain that peace and plenty abound. As to the river itself, I can only say that it is worthy of its vague but poetical and melodious Indian name, the interpretation of which is said to be *Daughter of the Stars.*

And now a single word in regard to Harper's Ferry. When I close my eyes and bring the scenery of this portion of the Potomac before my mind, I am disposed to agree, in every particular, with all those writers who have sung the praises of this remarkable gorge; but when I look upon it as it now appears, despoiled by the hand of civilization of almost every thing which gives a charm to the wilderness, I am troubled with an emotion allied to regret, and I again instinctively close my eyes, that I may look into the past, and once more hear the whoop of the Indian hunter following the fleet deer.

ADDENDA.

[The following highly interesting and valuable communications, are reprinted in this place by permission of the several writers, and for the purpose of concluding my little volume with an appropriate climax. The first was addressed to the Editors of the *National Intelligencer*, and published in that journal subsequently to the appearance of my "Letters from the Alleghany Mountains." The second was addressed to J. S. Skinner, Esq., but also published in the Intelligencer; and the third, introducing a letter from Professor C. U. Shepard, was originally addressed to the Editor of the *Highland Messenger*, (Ashville, N. C.) in which paper it made its first appearance: and the fourth communication, by Professor E. Mitchell, addressed to the Hon. Mr. Clingman, was published in the New-York Albion.]

C. L.

To the Editors of the National Intelligencer.

ASHVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA, October, 1848.

GENTLEMEN: As you have recently been publishing a series of letters in relation to that portion of the Alleghany range which is situated in North Carolina, you may, perhaps, find matter of interest in the subject of this communication. My purpose in making it is not only to present to the consideration of those learned or curious in geology facts singular and interesting in themselves, but also, by means of your widely disseminated paper, to stimulate an inquiry as to whether similar phenomena have been observed in any other parts of the Alleghany range.

A number of persons had stated to me that at different periods, within the recollection of persons now living, a portion of a certain mountain in Haywood county had been violently agitated and broken to pieces. The first of these shocks remembered by any person whom I have seen, occurred just prior to the last war with England, in the year 1811 or 1812. Since then some half a dozen or more have been noticed. The latest occurred something more than three years ago, on a clear summer morning. These shocks have usually occurred, or at least been more frequently observed, in calm weather. They have generally been heard distinctly by persons in the town of Waynesville, some twenty miles off. The sound is described as resembling the rumbling of distant thunder, but no shaking of the earth is felt at that distance. In the immediate vicinity of the mountain, and for four or five miles around, this sound is accompanied by a slight trembling of the earth, which continues as long as the sound lasts —that is, for one or two minutes. After each of these shocks the mountain was found to be freshly rent and broken in various places.

Having an opportunity afforded me a few days since, I paid a visit to the locality, and devoted a few hours to a hurried examination. It is situated in the northeastern section of Haywood county, near the head of Fine's creek. The bed of the little creek at the mountain is probably elevated some twenty-six or seven hundred feet above the level of the ocean. The valley of the French Broad, at the Warm Springs, some fifteen miles distant, is twelve hundred feet lower. They are separated, however, by a mountain ridge of more than four thousand feet elevation above the sea, and there are high mountains in all directions around the locality in question. The immediate object of interest is the western termination of a mountain ridge nearly half a mile to the east of the house of Mr. Matthew Rogers. The top of this ridge, at the place where it has been recently convulsed, is some three or four hundred feet above the creek, at its western extremity, but it rises rapidly for some distance as it goes off to the eastward towards the higher mountain range. The northern side of this ridge I had not time to examine, but the marks of violence are observable at the top of the ridge, and extend in a direction nearly due south, down the side of the mountain four or five hundred yards, to a little branch; thence across it, over a flat or gentle slope, and up the side of the next ridge as far as I went, being for three or four hundred yards. The tract of ground examined by me was perhaps half a mile in length from north to south. The breadth of the surface subjected to violence was nowhere

more than two hundred yards, and generally rather less than one hundred. Along this space the ground has been rent in various places. The fissures or cracks most frequently run in a northern and southern direction, and towards the tops of the mountains, but they are often at right angles to these, and in fact some may be found in all directions. While some of them are so narrow as to be barely visible, others are three or four feet in width. The annual falling of the leaves and the washing of the rains has filled them so that at no place are they more than five or six feet in depth. Along this tract all the large trees have been thrown down, and are lying in various directions, some of them six feet in diameter. One large poplar, which stood directly over one of the fissures, was cleft open, and one half of the trunk, to the height of more than twenty feet, is still standing. Though the fissure, which passed directly under its centre, is not more than an inch in width, it may be observed for nearly a hundred yards. All the roots of trees which crossed the lines of fracture are broken. The rocks are also cloven by these lines. The top of the ridge, which seems originally to have been an entire mass of granite, is broken in places. Not only have those masses of rock, which are chiefly under ground, been cleft open, but fragments lying on the surface have been shattered. All those persons who have visited it immediately after a convulsion, concur in saying that every fallen tree and rock has been moved. The smallest fragments have been thrown from their beds as though they had been lifted up. In confirmation of this statement I observed that a large block of granite, of an oblong form, which, from its size, must have weighed not less than two thousand tons, had been broken into three pieces of nearly equal size. This mass was lying loosely on the top of the ground, in a place nearly level, and there were no signs of its having rolled or slidden. The fragments were separated only a few inches, rendering it almost certain that it had been broken by a sudden shock or jar, which did not continue long enough to throw the pieces far apart.

Some parts of the surface of the earth have sunk down irregularly a few feet, other portions have been raised. There are a number of little elevations or hillocks, some of a few feet only in extent, and others twenty and thirty yards over. The largest rise at the centre to the height of eight or ten feet, and slope gradually down; some of these have been surrounded on all sides by a fissure, which is not yet entirely filled up. In some instances the trees on their sides, none of them large, are bent considerably from the perpendicular, showing that they had attained some size before the change of level took place on the surface where they grow.

The sides of the mountain generally are covered by a good vegetable mould, not particularly rocky, and sustaining trees of large size. But along the belt of convulsion the rocks are much more abundant, and there are only young trees growing, the elasticity of which enabled them to stand during the shocks.

With reference to the mineral structure of the locality, it may be remarked that that entire section seems to constitute a hypogene formation. It consists of granites, gneiss, sometimes porphyritic, hornblende rock, micaceous schists, clay slate, and various other metamorphic strata. The nearest aqueous rocks that I know of are the conglomerate sandstone and sedimentary limestone, in the vicinity of the Warm Springs, fifteen miles distant in a direct line. If any volcanic rock has been found in hundreds of miles I am not aware of it. The mountain itself bears the most indubitable marks of plutonic origin. It consists mainly of a grayish white granite, in which the felspar greatly predominates, but it is sometimes rendered dark by an excess of mica in minute black scales. This latter mineral I saw also there in small rather irregular crystals. Some portions of the rock contained, however, its three ingredients, in nearly equal proportions; the quartz, in color, frequently approaching ash gray. In several places I observed that the granite was cut vertically by veins of gray translucent quartz, of from one to six inches in thickness. There were also lying in places on the ground lumps of common opaque white quartz, intersected by narrow veins, not exceeding half an inch in thickness, of specular iron, of the highest degree of brilliancy and hardness that that mineral is capable of possessing. It may be remarked that there are, in different directions within two miles of the locality, two considerable deposits of magnetic iron ore. The only rock which I observed there possessing any appearance of stratification seems to consist of mica, hornblende and a little felspar, in a state of intimate mixture. Having but a few hours to remain there, I do not pretend that there are not many other minerals at the locality; but I have no doubt but that the predominating character of the formation is such as I have endeavored to describe it, and I have been thus minute, in order that others may be able to judge more accurately in relation to the cause of the disturbances.

Before visiting the locality I supposed that the phenomena might be produced by the giving way of some part of the base of the mountain, so as to produce a sinking or sliding of the parts; but a moment's examination was decisive on this point. It not unfrequently happens that aqueous

rocks rest on beds of clay, gravel, &c., which may be removed from underneath them by the action of running water or other causes. Cavities are thus produced, and it sometimes happens that considerable bodies of secondary limestone and other sedimentary strata sink down with a violent shock. This, however, is found to be true only of such strata as are deposited from water. But at the locality under consideration the rocks are exclusively of igneous origin, and, I may add, two of the class termed *hypogene* or "*netherformed*." For though felspar and hornblende have been found in the lower parts of some of the lavas, where the mass had been subjected to great pressure and cooled slowly, yet quartz and mica have never been found as constituents of any volcanic rock, not even in the basaltic dikes and injected traps, where there must have been a pressure equal to several hundred atmospheres. It is universally conceded by geologists that those rocks of which these minerals constitute a principal part, have been produced at great depths in the earth, where they were subjected to enormous pressure during their slow cooling and crystallization. Prior, therefore, to the denudation which has exposed these masses of granite to our view, they must have been overlaid and pressed down while in a fluid state by superincumbent strata of great thickness and vast weight. It is not probable, therefore, that any cavities could exist, nor, even if it were possible that such could be the case, is it at all likely that a granite arch which once upheld such an immense weight would in our day give way under the simple pressure of the atmosphere; or, even if we were to adopt the improbable supposition that the mass of granite composing this mountain had been formed at a great depth below the present surface of the earth, and forced up *bodily* by plutonic action, there is as little reason to believe that any cavities could exist. In fact, they are never found under granites. On looking at the surface of the ground at this place there is no appearance to indicate any general sinking of the mass. At the top of the ridge, where the fractures are observable across it, there is no variation in the slope of the surface or depression of the broken parts. Immediately below it, where the mountain has great steepness, equal at least to an inclination of forty-five degrees, where the line of fracture is parallel to the direction of the ridge, the surface is sunk suddenly ten or fifteen feet. This state of things, however, would inevitably be produced at such an inclination by the force of gravity alone, causing the parts separated by the shock to sink somewhat as they descend the mountain side. Lower down, where the steepness is not so great, the elevations much ex-

ceed the depressions. The same is true of the appearances on the south side of the branch, where the surface is almost level for several hundred yards; and I think that any one surveying the whole of the disturbed ground will be brought to the conclusion that there has been a general upheaval rather than a depression, and that the irregularities now observable are due to a force acting from below, which has, during the shocks, unequally raised different parts of the surface. One of the earlier geologists, while this science was in its infancy, would probably have ascribed these phenomena to the presence underneath the surface of a bed of pyrites, bituminous shale, or some other substances capable of spontaneous combustion, which had taken fire from being penetrated by a stream of water or some other accidental cause. If such a combustion were to take place at a considerable depth below the surface, and should to a great extent heat the strata above, they would thereby be expanded and thickened so as to be forced upward. Such an expansion, though it would be less in granite than in some other strata, as shown by your fellow-townsman, Col. Totten, would nevertheless, if the heated mass were thick and the elevation of temperature considerable, be sufficient to raise the surface as much as it appears to have been elevated; such expansion, however, being necessarily from its nature very gradual, would not account for the various violent shocks nor for the irregular action at the surface. On the other hand, if the burning mass were near the surface, so as to cause explosion by means of gases generated from time to time, it is scarcely conceivable that such gases, while escaping through fissures of the rock above, should fail to be observed, inasmuch as a great volume would be necessary to supply the requisite amount of force, nor is it at all probable that such a state of things would not be accompanied by a sensible change of temperature at the surface. The difficulty in the way of such a supposition is greatly increased when we consider the form of the long narrow belt acted on, and from the recurrence of the sudden violent shocks after long intervals of quiet. Such a hypothesis in fact I do not regard as entitled to more respect than another one which was suggested to me at the place. As it has no other merit than that of *originality*, I should not have thought it worth repeating but for the statement of fact made in support of it. While I was observing the locality, my attention was directed to an elderly man who was gliding with a stealthy step through the forest, carrying on his left shoulder a rifle, and in his right hand a small hoe, such as the diggers of ginseng use. His glances, alternating between the distant ridges and

the plants about his feet, showed that while looking for deer he was not unmindful of the wants of the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire. On my questioning him in relation to the appearances, he said that he had observed them often after the different shocks; that the appearances were changed each time at the surface; that I ought to see it just after a shock, before the rain and leaves had filled the cracks, adding that it did "not show at all now." He expressed a decided opinion that the convulsions were produced by *silver* under the surface. On my remarking that though I knew that that metal, in the hands of men, was an effective agent in cleaving rocks and excavating the earth, yet I had not supposed it could exert such an influence when deeply buried under ground, he stated in support of his opinion, that one of his neighbors had, on the north side of the mountain, found a spring hot enough to boil an egg. He also added that some three years since he had seen on the mountain, two miles to the north of this one, but in the direction seemingly of the line of force, a blazing fire for several hours, rising up sometimes as high as the tops of the trees, and going out suddenly for a moment at a time at frequent intervals. He declared that at the distance of a mile from where he was, the brightness was sufficient to enable him to see small objects. Several other persons in the vicinity I found subsequently professed to have seen the same light from different points of view, and described it in a similar manner. As no one of them seems to have thought enough of the matter to induce him to attempt to approach the place, though some persons represented that they had subsequently found a great quantity of "cinder" at the point, the statement of fact is not perhaps entitled to more weight than the hypothesis it was intended to support.

It is probable, however, that some difficulty will attend any explanation that can be offered in relation to the phenomena at this place. We know that the elevation of the surface of the earth is at many places undergoing a change, so gradual as not to be observed at any one time. Some of the northwestern parts of Europe, for example, are experiencing a slow *upheaval* equal to five or six feet in a century, while on the coast of Greenland the *subsidence*, or depression, is such that even the ignorant inhabitants have learned that it is not prudent for them to build their huts near the edge of the water. Similar changes are observed in various other places, but they obviously bear no analogy to the facts under consideration. Again, it is well known that earthquakes from time to time agitate violently portions of the earth's surface, of greater or less extent; that

while one single shock has permanently raised two or three feet the coast of Chili for several hundred miles, others have elevated or depressed comparatively small spaces. It usually happens, however, that when the shock is so forcible at one point as to break the solid strata of the globe, the surrounding parts are violently agitated for a considerable distance. In the present instance, however, the shock for half a mile at least in length, and for the breadth of one hundred yards, is such as to cleave a mass of granite of seemingly indefinite extent, and so quick and sudden as to displace the smallest fragments on the surface; and yet at the house of Mr. Rogers, less that half a mile distant, a slight trembling only is felt, not sufficient to excite alarm, while at the distance of a few miles, though the sound is heard, no agitation of the ground is felt. Should we adopt the view of those who maintain that all the central parts of the earth are in a state of fusion, and that violent movements of parts of the melted mass give rise to the shocks which are felt at the surface, the explanation of this and similar phenomena is still not free from difficulty. Upon the supposition that the solid crust of the globe has no greater thickness than that assumed by Humboldt, some twenty-odd miles, it would scarcely seem that such a crust, composed of rocky strata, would have the requisite degree of elasticity to propagate a violent shock to so small a surface, without a greater agitation of the surrounding parts than is sometimes observed. Volcanic eruptions, however, take place through every variety of strata; but these volcanoes are rarely if ever isolated; on the contrary, not only the volcanoes now active, but such as have been in a state of rest from the earliest historic era, are distributed along certain great lines of force, or belts, the limits of which seem to have been pretty well defined by geologists. But I am not aware of there being any evidence afforded of volcanic action, either in recent or remote geological ages, within hundreds of miles of this locality. Even if such exist beneath the sea, it must be at least two hundred miles distant. If then we attribute these convulsions to the same causes which have elsewhere generated earthquakes and volcanoes, is it probable that this is the only point in the Alleghany range thus acted on? The fact that nothing else of the kind has been, as far as I know, published to the world, is by no means conclusive, since the disturbances here have not only been unnoticed by writers, but are even unknown to nine-tenths of those persons living within fifty miles of the spot. Is it then improbable that different points of the great mountain range are sensibly acted on from year to year? It is true that this may

be the only locality affected. It might be supposed that there is at this place a mass of rock, separated wholly or partially from the adjoining strata, reaching to a great depth, and resting on a fluid basin, the agitation of which occasionally would give a shock to the mass. Though such be not at all probable, yet it is conceivable that such a mass might possess the requisite shape; and if at the top, instead of being a single piece, it should have a number of irregular fragments resting on it below the surface, then it might be capable of producing inequalities observable after each successive convulsion. From the form, however, of the belt acted on, as well as from other considerations, such a hypothesis is only possible, not probable. It would perhaps more readily be conceded that there was in the solid strata below an oblong opening, or wide fissure, connected with the fluid basin below, and filled either with melted lava, or more probably with elastic gas, condensed under vast pressure, so that the occasional agitations below would be propagated to the surface at this spot. Or if we suppose that steam, at a high heat, or some of the other elastic gaseous substances, should escape through fissures from the depths below, but have their course obstructed near the surface, so as to accumulate from time to time, until their force was sufficient to overpower the resistance, then a succession of periodic explosions might occur. Such a state of things would be analogous to the manner in which Mr. Lyell accounts for the Geysers, or Intermittent Hot Springs, in Iceland, except that the intervals between the explosions in this instance are much greater than in the other. It is easy to conceive that the shocks of some former earthquakes may have produced the requisite condition in the strata at that place.

Or, should we reject all such suppositions, it might be worth while to inquire whether this and similar phenomena may not be due to electricity? The opinion seems to have become general with men of science, that there are great currents of electricity circulating in the shell of the globe, mainly if not entirely in directions parallel to the magnetic equator. The observations and experiments of Mr. Fox have, in the opinion of a geologist so eminent as Mr. Lyell, established the fact that there are electro-magnetic currents along metalliferous veins. Taking these things to be true, it may well be that the electricity in its passage should be collected and concentrated along certain great veins. During any commotion in the great ocean of electricity, the currents along such lines, or rather where they are interrupted, might give rise to sensible shocks. The exceedingly quick vibratory motion, often observed on such occasions, seems analogous

to some of the observed effects of electricity. In the present instance the line of force appears to coincide with the direction of the magnetic needle. It is also represented that the sound accompanying the convulsions is heard more distinctly at Waynesville, twenty miles south, than it is within two or three miles to the east or west of the locality, seeming to imply that the force may be exerted in a long line, though it is more intense at a particular point. In adverting, however, to the manner in which the phenomena observed at this place might possibly be accounted for, it is not my expectation to be able to arrive at their cause. One whose attention is mainly directed to political affairs, and who at most gets but an occasional glimpse of a book of science, ought neither to assume, nor to be expected to accomplish this. I have adopted the above mode of making suggestions as to the causes, solely to enable me to explain the facts observed in a more intelligible manner than I could do by a mere detail of the appearances and events as narrated. Perhaps those whose minds are chiefly occupied with the consideration of such subjects will find an easy solution of these phenomena. Should this letter be instrumental in eliciting information in relation to similar disturbances elsewhere in the Alleghany range, then its publication may answer some valuable purpose.

Very respectfully, yours,

T. L. CLINGMAN.

Messrs. Gales & Seaton.

P. S. Since writing this letter, I have been apprized of a similar convulsion which occurred six or seven years ago, at a place some forty miles distant from this in a southwesterly direction. My informant says that at his house the ground was agitated for some minutes during a rumbling sound, and that a few miles off, the earth was rent and broken for the distance of two miles in length and nearly a half mile in breadth. Though I have not seen the locality, I have no doubt of the truth of the statement, nor of the general resemblance of the phenomena to those I have described above.

T. L. C.

To J. S. Skinner, Esq.

House of Representatves, Feb. 3, 1844.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 30th ultimo was received a day or two since, and I now avail myself of the very first opportunity to answer it. I

do so most cheerfully, because, in the first place, I am happy to have it in my power to gratify in any manner one who has done so much as yourself to diffuse correct information on subjects most important to the agriculture of the country; and, secondly, because I feel a deep interest in the subject to which your inquiries are directed.

You state that you have directed some attention to the sheep husbandry of the United States, in the course of which it has occurred to you that the people of the mountain regions of North Carolina, and some of the other Southern States, have not availed themselves sufficiently of their natural advantages for the production of sheep. Being myself well acquainted with the western section of North Carolina, I may perhaps be able to give you most of the information you desire. As you have directed several of your inquiries to the county of Yancey, (I presume from the fact, well known to you, that it contains the highest mountains in any of the United States,) I will, in the first place, turn my attention to that county. First, as to its elevation. Dr. MITCHELL, of our University, ascertained that the bed of Tow river, the largest stream in the county, and at a ford near its centre, was about twenty-two hundred feet above the level of the ocean. Burnsville, the seat of the court-house, he found to be between 2,800 and 2,900 feet above it. The general level of the county is, of course, much above this elevation. In fact, a number of the mountain summits rise above the height of six thousand feet. The climate is delightfully cool during the summer: there being very few places in the county where the thermometer rises above 80° on the hottest day. An intelligent gentleman who passed a summer in the northern part of the county (rather the more elevated portion of it) informed me that the thermometer did not rise on the hottest days above 76°.

You ask, in the next place, if the surface of the ground is so much covered with rocks as to render it unfit for pasture? The reverse is the fact; no portion of the county that I have passed over is too rocky for cultivation, and in many sections of the county one may travel miles without seeing a single stone. It is only about the tops of the highest mountains that rocky precipices are to be found. A large portion of the surface of the county is a sort of elevated table-land, *undulating*, but seldom too broken for cultivation. Even as one ascends the higher mountains, he will find occasionally on their sides flats of level land containing several hundred acres in a body. The top of the Roan (the highest mountain in the county except the Black) is covered by a prairie for ten miles, which affords a rich

pasture during the greater part of the year. The ascent to it is so gradual, that persons ride to the top on horseback from almost any direction. The same may be said of many of the other mountains. The soil of the county generally is uncommonly fertile, producing with tolerable cultivation abundant crops. What seems extraordinary to a stranger is the fact that the soil becomes richer as he ascends the mountains. The sides of the Roan, the Black, the Bald, and others, at an elevation of even five or six thousand feet above the sea, are covered with a deep rich vegetable mould, so soft, that a horse in dry weather often sinks to the fetlock. The fact that the soil is frequently more fertile as one ascends, is, I presume, attributable to the circumstance that the higher portions are more commonly covered with clouds, and the vegetable matter being thus kept in a cool moist state while decaying, is incorporated to a greater degree with the surface of the earth, just as it is usually found that the north side of a hill is richer than the portion most exposed to the action of the sun's rays. The sides of the mountains, the timber being generally large, with little undergrowth and brushwood, are peculiarly fitted for pasture grounds, and the vegetation is in many places as luxuriant as it is in the rich savanna of the low country.

The soil of every part of the county is not only favorable to the production of grain, but is peculiarly fitted for grasses. Timothy is supposed to make the largest yield, two tons of hay being easily produced on an acre, but herds-grass, or red-top, and clover, succeed equally well; blue-grass has not been much tried, but is said to do remarkably well. A friend showed me several spears, which he informed me were produced in the northern part of the county, and which by measurement were found to exceed seventy inches in length; oats, rye, potatoes, turnips, &c., are produced in the greatest abundance.

With respect to the prices of land, I can assure you that large bodies of uncleared rich land, most of which might be cultivated, have been sold at prices varying from twenty-five cents to fifty cents per acre. Any quantity of land favorable for sheep-walks might be procured in any section of the county, at prices varying from one to ten dollars per acre.

The few sheep that exist in the county thrive remarkably well, and are sometimes permitted to run at large during the winter without being fed, and without suffering. As the number kept by any individual is not large enough to justify the employment of a shepherd to take care of them, they are not unfrequently destroyed by vicious dogs, and more rarely by wolves, which have not yet been entirely exterminated.

I have been somewhat prolix in my observations on this county, because some of your inquiries were directed particularly to it, and because most of what I have said of Yancey is true of the other counties west of the Blue Ridge. Haywood has about the same elevation and climate of Yancey. The mountains are rather more steep, and the valleys somewhat broader; the soil generally not quite so deep, but very productive, especially in grasses. In some sections of the county, however, the soil is equal to the best I have seen.

Buncombe and Henderson are rather less elevated—Ashville and Hendersonville, the county towns, being each about 2,200 feet above the sea. The climate is much the same, but a very little warmer. The more broken portions of these counties resemble much the mountainous parts of Yancey and Haywood, but they contain much more level land. Indeed the greater portion of Henderson is quite level. It contains much swamp land, which, when cleared, with very little if any drainage, produces very fine crops of herds-grass. Portions of Macon and Cherokee counties are quite as favorable, both as to climate and soil, as those above described. I would advert particularly to the valleys of the Nantahalah, Fairfield, and Hamburg, in Macon, and of Cheoh, in Cherokee. In either of these places, for a comparatively trifling price, some ten or fifteen miles square could be procured, all of which would be rich, and the major part sufficiently level for cultivation, and especially fitted, as their natural meadows indicate, for the production of grass.

In conclusion, I may say that, as far as my limited knowlege of such matters authorizes me to speak, I am satisfied that there is no region that is more favorable to the production of sheep than much of the country I have described. It is every where healthy and well watered. I may add, too, that there is water power enough in the different counties composing my Congressional district, to move more machinery than human labor can ever place there—enough, certainly, to move all now existing in the Union. It is also a rich mineral region. The gold mines are worked now to a considerable extent. The best ores of iron are found in great abundance in many places; copper, lead,* and other valuable minerals exist.

* Since writing this letter I have discovered there the diamond, platina, blue corundum in large masses, of brilliant colors, and the most splendent lustre, sapphire, ruby, emerald, euclase, amethyst; also in various localities, zircon, pyropian garnet, chrome ore; and manganese, and barytes in large veins; likewise plumbago of the finest quality.

That must one day become the great manufacturing region of the South. I doubt if capital could be used more advantageously in any part of the Union than in that section.

For a number of years past the value of the live stock (as ascertained from books of the Turnpike Company) that is driven through Buncombe county is from two to three millions of dollars. Most of this stock comes from Kentucky and Ohio, and when it has reached Ashville it has travelled half its journey to the more distant parts of the Southern market, viz. Charleston and Savannah. The citizens of my district, therefore, can get their live stock into the planting States south of us at one half the expense which those of Kentucky and Ohio are obliged to incur. Not only sheep, but hogs, horses, mules, and horned cattle can be produced in many portions of my district as cheaply as in those two States.

Slavery is, as you say, a great *bugbear*, perhaps, at a distance; but I doubt if any person from the North, who should reside a single year in that country, whatever might be his opinions in relation to the institution itself, would find the slightest injury or inconvenience result to him individually. It is true, however, that the number of slaves in those counties is very small in proportion to the whole population.

I have thus, sir, hastily endeavored to comply with your request, because you state that you would like to have the information at once. Should you find my sketch of the region a very unsatisfactory and imperfect one, I hope you will do me the favor to remember that the desk of a member during a debate is not the most favorable position for writing an essay.

With very great respect, yours,

T. L. LINGMAN.

J. S. SKINNER, Esq.

To the Editor of the Highland Messenger.

You published a few weeks since an extract from an article in Silliman's Journal, contributed by Prof. Shepard, in which he described a diamond sent him from this region a few months since. As that extract excited some interest in the minds of a number of my friends who are engaged in the mining business, I inclose you a letter from Prof. Shepard, the publication of which I am sure would be acceptable to many of your readers. I may remark in explanation, that within the last few

years I have sent Prof. Shepard some hundreds of specimens of minerals collected in this and some of the other western counties of the State. In some instances a doubt as to the character of a particular mineral induced me to take this course, but more frequently it was done to gratify those of my acquaintances who wished to have their specimens examined by one in whose decision there would be absolute acquiescence. I knew too, that I should by these means be able favorably to make known to the public the existence in Western North Carolina, of such minerals as might be valuable in a commercial point of view, or interesting to the scientific world. The letter which I send you, was received in reply to an inquiry directed to Prof. Shepard, as to what was his opinion generally in relation to the minerals of this region, and what he thought of the propriety of a more careful survey of it than has hitherto been made. The answer, though merely in reply to my inquiries, is of such a character that I feel quite sure that its publication will be alike creditable to the writer and beneficial to the public. Even should it fail to produce any such impression on the minds of our legislators as might induce them to direct a complete geological survey of the State, its publicity may in other respects prove beneficial.

I have been pleased to observe that the letter of Prof. Mitchell, in relation to some of the minerals of this region, which appeared in your paper a year or two since, aroused the attention of a number of persons to that subject, and has been the means of bringing under my observation several interesting minerals. By going (whenever leisure has been afforded me,) to examine such localities as from their singular appearance or any peculiarity of external character, had aroused the attention of persons in the neighborhood,—I have induced many to manifest an interest in such subjects, so that there is in this region a considerable increase in the number of individuals who will lay up and preserve for examination singular looking minerals. Others are deterred from so doing, lest they should be laughed at by their neighbors as unsuccessful *hunters of mines*. Doubtless they deserve ridicule, who, so ignorant of mineralogy as not to be able to distinguish the most valuable metallic ores from the most common and worthless rocks, nevertheless spend their whole time in travelling about the country under the guidance of *mineral rods* or dreams, in search of mines. But, almost every one may without serious loss of time and with trifling inconvenience to himself, preserve for future examination specimens of the different mineral substances he meets with in his rambles. He

ought to remember that by so doing he may have it in his power to add to the knowledge, wealth and happiness of his countrymen. Partially separated as this region of country is by its present physical condition from the commercial world, it is of the first consequence to its inhabitants that all its resources should be developed. Opening valuable mines, besides diverting labor now unprofitably, because excessively, applied to agriculture, would attract capital from abroad and furnish a good home market to the farmer.

Should the proposed Railroad from Columbia to Greenville, S. C., be completed, I am of opinion that the manganese and chrome ores in this and some of the adjoining counties would be profitably exported. Though the veins of sulphate of baryta in the northern part of this county, contain pure white varieties suitable to form an adulterant in the manufacture of the white lead of commerce, yet, for want of a navigable stream, it is not probable that they will ever be turned to account in that way. They have, however, at some points, a metallic appearance at the surface, they lie at right angles to the general direction of the veins of the country, go down vertically, and being associated abundantly with several varieties of iron pyrites, oxides of iron, fluor spar and quartz, and containing traces of copper and lead, will doubtless at no very distant day, be explored to a greater or less extent. There is not a single county west of the Blue Ridge, that does not contain in abundance rich iron ores. In some instances these deposites are adjacent to excellent water power and limestone, and are surrounded by heavily timbered cheap lands. The sparry carbonate of iron, or *steel ore*, of which a specimen some years since, fell under the observation of Prof. Mitchell, though he was not able to ascertain the locality from which it came, is abundant at a place rather inaccessible in the present condition of the country. It is not probable that in our day the beautiful statuary marble of Cherokee, both white and flesh-colored, will be turned to much account for want of the means of getting it into those markets where it is needed. Besides the minerals referred to in Prof. Shepard's letter, some of the ores of copper exist in the western part of this State. I have the carbonate, (green malachite,) the black oxide, and some of the sulphurets. Whether, however, these, as well as the ores of lead and zinc, (both the carbonate and sulphuret exist here,) are in sufficient abundance to be valuable, cannot be ascertained without further examination than has yet been made.

Many persons are deterred from making any search, and are discour-

aged because valuable ores are not easily discovered on the surface of this country. This is not usually the case any where. Gold, it is true, because it always exists in the metallic state, and because it resists the action of the elements better than any other substance, remains unchanged, while the *gangue*, or mineral containing it crumbles to pieces and disappears, and hence it is easily found about the surface by the most careless observer. Such, however, is not generally the case with metallic ores. On the contrary, many of the best ores would, if exposed to the action of the elements, in progress of time be decomposed, or so changed from the appearances which they usually present when seen in cabinets, that none but a practised eye would detect them at the surface. In the counties west of the Blue Ridge, there has been as yet no exploration to any depth beneath the surface of the ground, with perhaps the single exception of the old excavations in the county of Cherokee. According to the most commonly received Indian tradition, they were excavated more than a century ago, by a company of Spaniards from Florida. They are said to have worked there for two or three summers, to have obtained a white metal, and prospered greatly in their mining operations, until the Cherokees, finding that if it became generally known that there were valuable mines in their country, the cupidity of the white men would expel them from it, determined in solemn council to destroy the whole party, and that in obedience to that decree no one of the adventurous strangers was allowed to return to the country whence they came. Though this story accords very well with the Indian laws which condemned to death those who disclosed the existence of mines to white men, yet I do not regard it as entitled to much credit. At the only one of these localities which I have examined, besides some other favorable indications, there is on the surface of the ground in great abundance that red oxide of iron, which from its being found in Germany above the most abundant deposites of the ores of lead and silver, has been called by the Germans the *Iron Hat*. Also something resembling that iron ore rich in silver, which the Spaniards called pacos, is observable there. It seems more probable, therefore, that some of those companies of enterprising Spaniards, that a century or two since were traversing the continent in search of gold and silver mines, struck by these appearances, sunk the shafts in question and soon abandoned them as unproductive. But which of these is the more probable conjecture, cannot perhaps be determined, until some one shall

be found adventurous enough to re-open those old shafts. I am, however, keeping your readers too long from the interesting letter of Prof. Shepard.

T. L. CLINGMAN.

New Haven, Conn., Sept. 15, 1746,

Hon. Mr. Clingman,—Dear Sir :—To your inquiry of what I think of the mineral resources of Western North Carolina, it gives me pleasure to say that no part of the United States has impressed me more favorably than the region referred to. It is proper, however, to state, that my acquaintance with it is not the result of personal observation, but has been formed from a correspondence of several years standing with yourself and Dr. Hardy, and from the inspection of numerous illustrative specimens supplied to me at different times by my colleague, Dr. S. A. Dickson, of Charleston, S. C., and by the students of a Medical College of South Carolina, who have long been in the habit of bringing with them to the college samples of the minerals of their respective neighborhoods. I may add to these sources of information, the mention of not unfrequent applications made to me by persons from North Carolina, who have had their attention called to mines and minerals, with a view to their profitable exploration. Nor shall I ever forget the pleasure I experienced a year or two since, on being waited upon in my laboratory by a farmer from Lincolnton, who had under his arm a small trunk of ore in lumps, which he observed that he had selected on account of their size, from the gold washings of his farm during the space of a single year. The trunk contained not far from twelve hundred dollars in value, and one of the specimens weighed two hundred and seventy-five dollars.

I have recognized in the geological formation of the southwestern counties of North Carolina, the same character which distinguishes the gold and diamond region of the Minas Geraes of Brazil, and the gold and platina district (where diamonds also exist) of the Urals, in Siberia. It is this circumstance, beyond even the actual discoveries made with us, that satisfies my mind of the richness of the country in the precious metals and the diamond. The beautiful crystal of this gem which you sent me last spring, from a gold washing in Rutherford, however, establishes the perfect identity of our region with the far-famed auriferous and diamond countries of the South and the East.

Neither can there remain any doubt concerning the existence of valuable deposites of manganese, lead, crome and iron, in your immediate vicinity, to which I think we are authorized to add zinc, barytes and marble. I have also seen indications of several of the precious stones, besides the diamond, making it on the whole, a country of the highest mineralogical promise.

Enough has already been developed, as it appears to me, in the minerals of the region under consideration, to arouse the attention of prudent legislators to this fertile source of prosperity in a State. If a competent surveyor of the work were obtained, under whose direction a zealous and well-instructed corps of young men, (now easily to be obtained from those States in which such enterprises are just drawing to a close,) could take the field, I have no doubt that numerous important discoveries would immediately be made, and that the entire outlay required for carrying forward the work, would in a very short time be many times over returned to the people from mineral wealth, which now lies unobserved in their very midst. But the highest advantages of such a survey would no doubt prove with you as it has done elsewhere, to be *the spirit of inquiry which it would impart to the population generally*, producing among their own ranks an efficient band of native mineralogists and geologists, whose services, in their own behalf, in that of their neighbors and the State at large, would, in a few years, greatly outweigh all that had been achieved by the original explorers. It is thus in the States of New-England, New-York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and Maryland, that there are scattered every where through those communities, numbers of citizens, who having first had their attention called to the subject by the scientific men appointed by the Legislature, have now become fully competent to settle most of the questions which arise relating to the values of the unknown mineral substances, which from time to time are submitted by their less informed neighbors for determination. A very observable impulse has in this way been given to the development of underground wealth; and many valuable mines are in the course of active exploration, which but for these surveys and the attendant consequences of them, would now remain not only unproductive but unknown. Nor is the mere mineral yield of these mines to be considered in determining the advantages that accrue to a community from such enterprises. The indirect results to the neighborhood in which the mines are situated, are often very great; such for example as those flowing from the increased demand for farming produce, from the free circulation of

capital, the improvement of roads, and the general stimulus which is always imparted by successful enterprise to the industry of a country. I may be permitted to add in conclusion also, that an important service is always rendered true science, in restraining the uninformed from unprofitable adventures.

I have a wish to see the public survey of North Carolina undertaken, not only on account of its economical bearings, but from the conviction with which I am impressed, that it will equally promote the progress of science, and elevate the character of our country at large.

I have the honor to remain very truly and obediently yours.

CHARLES UPHAM SHEPARD.

To Hon. T. L. Clingman, but originally published in the New-York Albion.

My Dear Sir,—I promised my friends in the Western counties that they should hear from me through the Highland Messenger, and to the editor of that paper that he should receive one or two communications. As the person who undertakes to inform the public on subjects not strictly in the line of his profession is likely to fall into some errors, and to say some things which will not be thought very wise, I have wished that what I have to offer, might, before going to press, pass under the eye of one, who, like yourself, has long taken a deep interest in every thing connected with the mountain region, is well acquainted with the larger part of it, and in whose friendly feeling I could fully rely. The statements and remarks that are to follow, will fall naturally under the four heads of *Elevation of the Country and Height of the Mountains, Soil and Agriculture, Minerals and Scenery.*

The elevation of the highest mountain peaks was ascertained by me within certain limits of accuracy about eight years ago. So little was known about them before that time, that the Grandfather was commonly regarded as the highest of all. With the view of coming somewhere near the truth, one barometer was stationed at Morganton, and another carried to the tops of the mountains. Their elevation above that village was thus ascertained; but in order to get their height above the level of the sea, that of Morganton must be known, and for this there were no data in which implicit confidence could be placed. I finally fixed upon 968 feet as a moderate estimate, and in my desire to avoid an extravagant and incredi-

ble result, it now appears that the elevation assigned to Morganton, and therefore to all the heights measured, was somewhat too small.

In the first report of the President and Directors of the Louisville, Cincinnati, and Charleston Railroad, it is stated as one of the results of the surveys and measurements made with reference to that work, that "the elevation of the summit of our mountain passing above a line drawn along what may be regarded as their base about twenty miles below, does not exceed 1051 feet. This will leave 1114 feet for the height of that line above the sea, or 146 feet more than I had allowed for Morganton.

But the surveys referred to were carried along the French Broad river, in the immediate vicinity of Ashville, and therefore afford a base, or starting point, from which all the heights in that region could be conveniently ascertained. Dr. Dickson having undertaken to observe the barometer at Ashville, and knowing that in his hands it would afford results in which confidence could be placed, I determined to try the Black once more, in which mountain I was well satisfied that the highest points are to be found, as I was, also, that I had never yet been upon the highest.

The Black Mountain, as you well know, is a long curved ridge, 15 or 20 miles in length, its base having somewhat the form of a common fish-hook, of which the extremity of the shank is near Thomas Young's, in Yancey. It sweeps round by the heads of the South fork of the Swannanoe, Rim's Creek and Ivy, and ends at the Big Butt, or Yates's Knob—Cancy river drains by a number of forks the hollow of the curve. The summit of the ridge is depressed at some points, and rises at others into peaks or knobs, 2, 3 or 400 feet higher than the rest, and it is a matter of considerable difficulty to determine before ascending which is the highest, as we cannot tell how much the apparent elevation is affected by the distance of the different points. The general elevation of the ridge may be stated at 600 feet. The following are the heights measured, which are likely to have most interest for the readers of the Messenger.

	Feet.
Ashville,	2200
French Broad at Ashville,	1977
Lower Ford of Pigeon,	2475
Waynesville,	2722
Head of Scott's Creek,	3240
Tuckaseege Ford,	1927
Cullywhee Gap,	3397

Blue Ridge head of Tuckaseege,	3795
Col. Zachary's Cashier's Valley,	3324
Chimney Top,	4433
Chimney Top above Zachary's,	1109
Burnsville,	2763
Top of Black,	6672
Morganton,	1031
Table Rock,	3584
Grandfather,	5719
Roan,	6187

It appears that the valley of the French Broad is a trough, or depression, extending quite across the great back-bone of the United States, having the parallel, but considerably higher valleys of the Nolachucky and Pigeon on its two sides. Ivy Ridge is the boundary of this valley on the north-east, the ford of Ivy creek, near Solomon Carters, having very nearly the height of Ashville. The difference of temperature and climate corresponds to the indications of the barometer, grain and wild fruits ripening sooner about Ashville, than in the neighborhood of either Burnsville or Waynesville. At the ford of the Tuckaseege, on the road to Franklin, we are at the bottom of another deep and warm valley, but this does not, like that of the French Broad, extend across the whole range of the Alleghanies.

These measurements are not altogether without value, to the people of Haywood and Macon, showing as they do, what is the amount of obstacle that has to be overcome in carrying a road from Tennessee into South Carolina, along the Tuckaseege. Such a road should be made, or rather the existing one should be greatly improved, and the route altered in some places. There is likely to be a good deal of travel along it, but the gap in the Blue Ridge, where it is to pass, is about 1500 feet higher than that at the head of the French Broad.

There are but two routes by which the highest peaks of the Black Mountains can be reached, without an amount of labor which few people are willing to undergo. One is by the head of Swanannoe. This brings us to a point a little higher than the top of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. The other is from the south fork of Tow. It is represented as quite practicable, and leads to the highest summit.

Agriculture.—The mountain counties, Ashe, Yancey, Buncombe, Hen-

derson, Haywood and Macon, do not appear to have adopted fully those modes of culture which are the best suited to their soil and climate, and which are likely ultimately to prevail. For this two reasons may be assigned.

1. The great amount of travel, through the counties of Ashe, Henderson and Buncombe, (but especially the two last,) between the Atlantic states and the West, has created a demand for the different kinds of grain, and given a direction to the industry of the population of those counties, which but for the circumstance mentioned, would be neither natural nor profitable. The roads have consumed all the corn that could be raised. The practice of the farmers living near the roads, which will answer very well for them, (especially if somewhat more attention be paid to the cultivation of the grasses), may be expected to have an under influence in the remote parts of those counties.

2. The families by whom these counties were settled, were from below the ridge, and carried with them into the mountain region, the kind of husbandry to which they have been accustomed in the warmer and drier parts from which they came. It is only gradually that men change the habits and practices of their earlier days. This influence of custom is exhibited on the northernmost range of counties in North Carolina, along the Virginia line, where the culture of tobacco prevails much more extensively than a little farther south, where the soil is equally well adapted to the growth of that noxious weed.

The latitude and elevation—and of course the temperature of the mountain counties as far as it depends upon these two, are very nearly the same with those of ancient Arcadia—the country of herdsmen and shepherds. Their soil is different, having been formed by the decomposition of primitive rocks—granite, gneiss and mica slate—whilst limestone abounds in Arcadia, as well as other parts of Greece. But it is to the raising of cattle and sheep and the making of butter and cheese for the counties below the ridge, that it may be expected there will be a tendency in the industry of the mountain region for many years. The quantity of rain falling there, is greater than in the eastern parts of the state, and luxuriant meadows of the most valuable grasses, but especially of timothy, may be easily formed. This is for winter food. But the summer pastures, too, are susceptible of great improvement.

Whilst the Indians held possession of the country it was burnt over every year. The fire destroyed the greater number of the young trees,

that were springing up, and the large ones remained thinly scattered, like the apple trees in an orchard with large open spaces between. In these, the different kinds of native vines and other wild plants,—pea vine, &c., contended for the mastery, and each prevailed and excluded the other according to the vigor of its growth. Macon county still exhibits in some parts the appearance which the whole back country of North Carolina may be supposed to have borne when the first settlements of the whites were made. But after the Indians had been removed and large quantities of stock were introduced, the cattle and horses lent their aid in this contest of the different vegetable species and in favor of the worst kinds. They ate out and destroyed such as they found palatable and suitable for the nourishment of animals, whilst such as are worthless were permitted to grow and occupy the ground. In the mean time the annual firing of woods that had been practised by the Indians having ceased, bushes and small trees have overspread and shaded a large space that was formerly covered with herbage. For these two reasons, therefore, because the best kinds of vegetables have been in a great measure eaten out, and destroyed, and because of the thickening of the forests, the range (even if the population were still the same) would be greatly inferior to what it was fifty years ago.

It is necessary here as in other cases that the industry and ingenuity of man should come in to direct, and to some extent, control the operations of nature. The best grasses—best for pasturage, must be introduced and made to take the place of such as are worthless. The milk, butter, and cheese would be improved in quality as well as increased in quantity. As the wild onion, where eaten by cows, gives milk a flavor that is intolerable to some persons, so it may be expected that bitter and unpalatable weeds of every kind will give it a wild and savage taste; that it will be inferior in purity and richness to such as is yielded where the sweetest and best grasses are the only food. It appeared to me as I rode down from the Flat Rock to Ashville that there were very extensive tracts in Henderson and in the southern part of Buncombe now almost waste and worthless, which would, in the course of a few years, be converted into artificial pastures; not the most fertile in the world—but such as would amply repay an outlay of capital upon them; that the marshes and low grounds would be drained, and rank timothy take the place of sedge and other coarse grasses that afford no nourishment. In the immediate neighborhood of the Flat Rock I saw that the good work had been begun and made a considerable progress.

The sides of the mountains are too steep to be cleared and converted into pastures that will have any permanent value. The soil that is exposed would be washed away. But there are tracts, some of no inconsiderable extent, and especially near the crest of the ridge and along the head springs of the western waters, where the surface is comparatively livid, the soil sufficiently moist and fertile, and where capital might be advantageously invested for the purpose of converting them into meadows and pastures. The tops of the mountains also, where the ridge is broad or a single summit has a rounded surface instead of a sharp peak, will afford a few grazing farms. I do not altogether despair of living to see the time when the highest summit of the Black shall be inclosed and covered with a fine coat of the richest grasses, and when the cheese of Yancey shall rival in the market of the lower counties that which is imported from other States.

For accomplishing this a good deal of labor will be required. But the person to whom it has happened to visit Burnsville soon after it was fixed upon as the seat of Justice for Yancey county, and during the present year, will have good hopes of very rough and unsightly places. A more doleful spot than it was in the year 1834, cannot well be imagined; and though there is ample room for improvement yet, it is not difficult to see that the time is near when there will be a range of meadows passing by and near it, alike productive and beautiful.

If an inhabitant of the mountains shall be desirous of calling in the experience of other parts of our widely extended country for the purpose of directing his own labors, there is no section of the United States which he would visit with more advantage than the genuine Yankee land—the New England States. The soil is to a great extent the same with his own, having been produced by the decomposition of primitive rocks; elevation compensating for difference of latitude, there is a considerable similarity of climate. And if after seeing what the labor of two centuries has accomplished there, he shall pass through the mountain region of North Carolina, whilst he will be pleased to see how much has been done in his own section, he will fix upon many spots that are now in a great measure neglected, as those which a patient industry will in the course of a few years render the most productive and valuable. Extensive tracts in Henderson county, the moist grounds inclining to swamp in the neighborhood of Waynesville, the valley of Scott's creek, bordering the road, the head waters of the Tuckaseege and those of the Savannah on the south side of the

Blue Ridge, are cited as examples because they fell under my immediate observation.

Closely connected with agriculture as affording access to a market are good roads, and it was with some surprise that I noticed certain indications that the road scraper has never been introduced into the western part of the State, but that all the difficult passes in the mountains had been wrought out with the plough, the hoe, and shovel. The Warm Spring turnpike has inequalities, elevations and depressions, even between the village of Ashville and the point where it first comes into contact with the river, that would not be permitted to continue for a year if this excellent labor-saving instrument were once to come into use. For removing earth through short distances, for a hundred feet to a hundred yards, there is nothing comparable to it. A single man and horse will accomplish as much as six or eight men with the ordinary tools.

I am respectfully yours,

E. MITCHELL.

To Hon. T. L. Clingman.

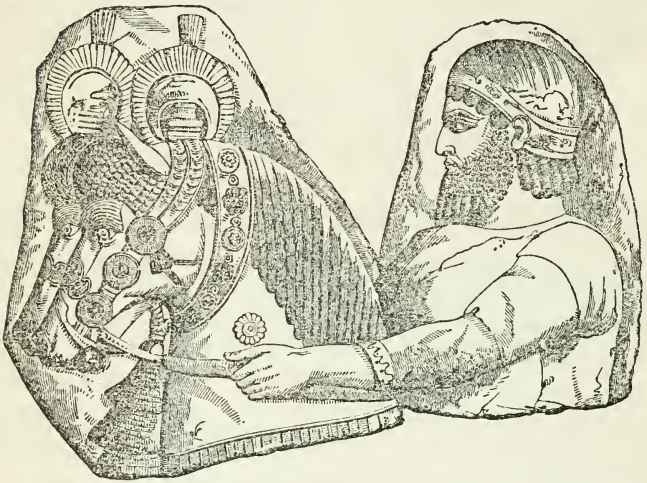
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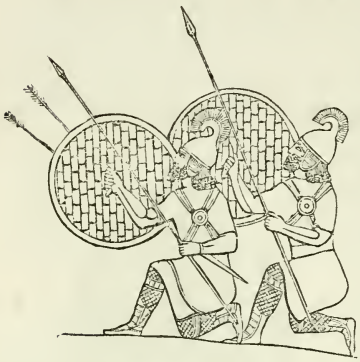
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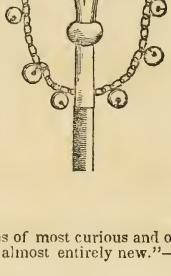
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